



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 5 November 2025

Session 6



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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Wednesday 5 November 2025

CONTENTS

	Col.
BUSINESS MOTION	1
PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME	2
RURAL AFFAIRS, LAND REFORM AND ISLANDS	2
Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill.....	2
Path Networks.....	3
Animal-related Activities (Licensing Regulations).....	4
Land Use (Urban Settings).....	5
Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund.....	7
Fishing Industry.....	8
Agricultural Land (Change of Use).....	9
New Farmers and Crofters (South Lanarkshire).....	10
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	13
National Health Service (Opinion Poll).....	13
NHS Grampian (Procurement Practices).....	16
Mental Health Support (Vulnerable Women and Girls).....	17
NHS Grampian (Financial Scrutiny).....	18
General Practitioner Walk-in Centres.....	21
Walk-in Primary Care Clinics (Impact on Health Inequalities).....	23
Baby Loss (Support).....	24
MATERNITY SERVICES	26
<i>Motion moved—[Jackie Baillie].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Neil Gray].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Sandesh Gulhane].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Willie Rennie].</i>	
Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab).....	26
The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray).....	30
Sandesh Gulhane (Glasgow) (Con).....	37
Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD).....	40
Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green).....	42
Davy Russell (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab).....	44
Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP).....	46
Meghan Gallacher (Central Scotland) (Con).....	49
Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP).....	51
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab).....	53
Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP).....	56
Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con).....	59
Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP).....	61
Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab).....	63
Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP).....	65
Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD).....	68
Patrick Harvie.....	70
Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con).....	71
The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Jenni Minto).....	73
Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab).....	76
LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) BILL: STAGE 3	80
LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) BILL	99
<i>Motion moved—[Mairi Gougeon].</i>	
The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon).....	99
Tim Eagle (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....	102
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab).....	104
Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green).....	107
Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD).....	108
Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP).....	110
Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....	112

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab)	113
Ariane Burgess	115
Mercedes Villalba (North East Scotland) (Lab)	116
Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con)	118
Mairi Gougeon	119
BUSINESS MOTION	123
<i>Motion moved—[Graeme Dey]—and agreed to.</i>	
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS	125
<i>Motions moved—[Graeme Dey].</i>	
Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con).....	125
The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance)	126
MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE	130
<i>Motion moved—[Graeme Dey]—and agreed to.</i>	
DECISION TIME	131
GLOBAL CLIMATE JUSTICE AND FAIR CLIMATE FINANCE	143
<i>Motion debated—[Nicola Sturgeon].</i>	
Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow Southside) (SNP).....	143
Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con)	146
Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP).....	147
Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab).....	149
Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green)	150
The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy (Gillian Martin)	152

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 5 November 2025

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

Business Motion

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): Good afternoon. The first item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-19555, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on changes to business. Any member who wishes to speak to the motion should press their request-to-speak button now.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revisions to the programme of business for Thursday 6 November 2025—

delete

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Social Justice and Housing

and insert

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Social Justice and Housing

followed by Ministerial Statement: The Draft Climate Change Plan 2025—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

Portfolio Question Time

Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

14:00

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

1. **Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill to determine whether there could be any unintended consequences. (S6O-05090)

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): We have undertaken the full suite of assessments that were required for introduction of the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill. The rationale for the bill is set out in the accompanying policy memorandum. Ahead of its introduction, the Scottish Government carried out three public consultations on the proposals in the bill, and the responses to those consultations informed its development. In addition, officials continue to engage closely with internal and external stakeholders, including non-government organisations, land managers and farmers, to identify and address any potential unintended consequences.

Sue Webber: The bill could seriously impact the deer management sector, allowing NatureScot's overreach and conflicting powers to be enhanced while eroding the trust of those who work in the sector. Meanwhile, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and NFU Scotland have expressed significant concerns about unintended impacts of the bill's mandatory training provisions, which come without any grandfather rights on lowland deer management. That could create barriers to entry and reduce the pool of active deer stalkers, despite a lack of evidence indicating that it is required.

At a time when the Government is legislating for more deer to be culled across Scotland, why is it simultaneously ignoring such concerns?

Jim Fairlie: We are not ignoring concerns at all. I stated in my first answer that we are actively engaging with deer managers right across the country—lowland and upland.

On the ability to shoot deer effectively, I do not think that it is too much to ask to ensure that deer stalkers and those who control deer have the requisite training to ensure that that is done safely and appropriately.

Mercedes Villalba (North East Scotland) (Lab): Environmental groups such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds have highlighted the high financial costs for removal of conifer

seedlings and seed rain. As things stand, NatureScot and other environmental restoration groups must use already stretched budgets to mitigate the environmental damage that is caused by the negligence of private companies. There is concern that, if the bill does not address that issue, it might unintentionally further embolden big polluters. Does the Scottish Government support the principle that the polluters must pay for the environmental damage that their industry causes?

Jim Fairlie: I absolutely understand that there are some concerns about the seeding of conifers, but all those things will be stretched out and discussed as the bill progresses.

Path Networks

2. Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it is supporting path networks established under land reform legislation for outdoor recreation. (S6O-05091)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon): Our right of responsible non-motorised access to land is world leading in extent, scope and clarity. Access authorities, which are our local and national park authorities, have a duty under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to uphold access rights and to draw up a plan for a system of paths—a core path network—that is sufficient to give local users and visitors reasonable access throughout their areas. As that is a local authority responsibility, the Scottish Government supports the duty primarily through the provision of the annual block grant to local authorities.

Michael Matheson: The cabinet secretary will recognise that the path network plays an important part in our recreational programme for walkers across Scotland. However, there is growing concern about the maintenance of the path network. We spend almost £188 million a year on active travel infrastructure, but less than 1 per cent of that is allocated to our national path network. Will she engage with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to explore how a greater allocation of the active travel budget could be allocated to our national path network?

Mairi Gougeon: I am more than happy to agree to engage with colleagues on that point. Some of the funding issues for paths have been related to the fact that we have a number of different funds for a number of different areas. It makes sense for us to utilise that funding in the best possible way and where it will have the best impact.

Our rights of access are world leading and we should be proud of that, but maintenance of our core path networks is critical. I am more than happy to follow the point up with colleagues and write to Michael Matheson with a response.

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green): I welcome the cabinet secretary's response to Michael Matheson and I welcome the increased active travel investment, which was a key achievement of the Scottish Greens during our time in government. However, does the cabinet secretary recognise that that funding is not reaching recreational paths in the countryside, which are under increasing pressure? Will she therefore ensure that the new rural support plan will provide funding for outdoor access, as is now the case in Wales and used to be the case in Scotland until 2022?

Mairi Gougeon: I thank Ariane Burgess for raising that point, which reiterates how important the issue is. Funding for access was devolved to local government in the concordat that was reached in 2008, so it remains the responsibility of local authorities. Notwithstanding that, however, given some of the other funding streams that we have talked about, I want to ensure that that funding gets to where it needs to go and that we help to maintain those networks. I am more than happy to follow up with Ariane Burgess on how we go about that.

Animal-related Activities (Licensing Regulations)

3. Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government, further to its consultation on proposals to introduce new licensing regulations covering a range of animal-related activities, what discussions it has had with Police Scotland and Trading Standards Scotland. (S6O-05092)

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): Officials from the Scottish Government's animal welfare team meet trading standards officers as part of their regular engagement with local authorities, which are responsible for the enforcement of animal licensing legislation. There have been no discussions about licensing with Police Scotland since the consultation in 2023.

Stuart McMillan: The minister will be aware that I hosted a parliamentary round-table meeting last week to discuss the regulation of pet services, which was attended by Trading Standards Scotland, the Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Police Scotland and members of the Scottish Parliament. The discussion recognised the challenges with enforcement of any potential new regulatory rules and the fact that, when complaints or concerns are raised about pet groomers, pet boarders or dog walkers, the lack of regulation covering those businesses prohibits the police, trading standards officials or Scottish SCPA officers from being able to act.

Will the minister provide an update on the Scottish Government's position on the matter, given that the consultation analysis demonstrated overwhelming support from the public for regulation of pet services? Would he encourage the next Government, after the election, to introduce legislation to improve safeguards for pets?

Jim Fairlie: Although the consultation demonstrated support for licensing, concerns were also expressed about the proportionality and cost of statutory licensing and about the capacity of local authorities to absorb and meaningfully enforce additional licensing requirements when budgets are already stretched. We are therefore assessing whether less onerous and more proportionate approaches, such as registration schemes linked to codes of conduct, could deliver similar outcomes to licensing. In the meantime, our immediate focus is to deliver on the proposal to regulate canine fertility businesses, due to the significant animal welfare concerns that are associated with that sector.

Land Use (Urban Settings)

4. Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to deal with and improve land use issues, in particular dereliction and abandonment, in the urban setting. (S6O-05093)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon): The Scottish Government has put in place an enabling policy framework, including national planning framework 4, which actively encourages the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. We back that up with targeted funding to tackle the challenges of long-term vacant and derelict land. In 2025-26, the vacant and derelict land fund allocated £7.6 million to the five local authorities with the greatest amount of long-term vacant and derelict land. So far, the vacant and derelict land investment programme has invested in 33 projects, bringing just over 112 hectares of land back into use.

Willie Coffey: I have tried over many years to coax and cajole land and building owners to do something about the abandoned assets that they own in our towns, and have asked them to either clean and tidy them up, repurpose them or even sell them. Mostly, they ignore those pleas, since the councils usually act only if a property becomes a danger to the public. Abandoned land and derelict buildings can be the norm in many towns in Scotland.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that it may be time for a different approach to those issues, with a move away from legislation and the serving of notices towards the promotion of a more co-

operative approach? That would bring owners, retailers, the community and local councils together to bring about positive change in order to steadily improve the environment in the urban landscape in particular, in which we all share an interest.

Mairi Gougeon: I welcome the points that Willie Coffey makes, because I absolutely appreciate just how frustrating the situation is, and what a blight it can be, for communities. I am happy to hear and open to considering any new approaches that he might be willing to suggest. Those matters straddle a few different portfolios, so I will be keen to have those discussions with colleagues and raise the issues with them.

It is also important, however, to point out some of the other pieces of work that are under way that I think could help with some of the issues that Willie Coffey has outlined. We have had the consultation on community right to buy, which closed at the start of October, and there could well be relevant impacts from that, given the community right to buy that exists for abandoned, detrimental or neglected land. A consultation is also under way on compulsory sales orders, which, again, could help with some of those issues.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The Scottish Government's Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, which we are currently considering at stage 3, excludes urban Scotland and other settlement types unless they are situated on large land holdings. There is no mechanism to ensure that the public interest is considered in urban land management or urban land sales.

My colleague Paul Sweeney MSP has highlighted that, in Glasgow, 53 per cent of the population live within 500m of derelict land. The Scottish Government has long stated that work is under way, including the current review of the community right to buy. However, can the cabinet secretary tell us what steps the Government will take to deal with the matter and when we can expect that work to happen?

Mairi Gougeon: Rhoda Grant has raised some important points, as Paul Sweeney did when he spoke on some of the amendments that we discussed in our stage 3 consideration of the bill. The approach that we are taking through the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, which is focused on rural land, is based on the recommendations in the Scottish Land Commission's report as to where the issues are more pressing. However, that does not mean that we forget about urban areas and the pressures that exist there.

I have outlined some of the work—Rhoda Grant touched on it, too—such as the consultation on and review of community right to buy. I also

touched on the consultation in relation to compulsory sales orders and compulsory purchase orders. The consultation has just closed, and it is important that we analyse the results to see what amendments could be needed to the various community rights to buy to ensure that those powers are easy for communities to use to tackle some of the issues that are right on their doorsteps.

I look forward to engaging further with Rhoda Grant as that work develops but, as I said, the consultation has only recently closed, so we need to examine the outcome of that first.

Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund

5. Audrey Nicoll (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential impact of the UK-wide fishing and coastal growth fund on opportunities for innovation that maximise the value created by Scotland's seafood industry. (S6O-05094)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon): The allocation of just 7.78 per cent of the fishing and coastal growth fund to Scotland is an insult to our vital fishing industry and coastal communities. It is unacceptable and must be reconsidered. Scotland accounts for more than 60 per cent of the United Kingdom's fishing capacity and seafood exports, and Scottish vessels land more than 75 per cent of UK quota species. We made it clear to the UK Government that Scotland's allocation should be at least 46 per cent, reflecting our share of the UK's European Union fisheries funding. The unfair allocation severely restricts our ability to support critical innovation as our industry faces mounting pressures, and I strongly urge the UK Government to reconsider.

Audrey Nicoll: The insulting offer of just £28 million of the £360 million is a hammer blow for our fishing sector.

Seafood Scotland is driving the development of a Scottish ocean cluster, with Scotland joining the vanguard of countries that are researching how to extract more value from fish byproducts. In the face of the legacy of Brexit and a woeful UK Government funding offer, does the cabinet secretary agree that initiatives such as the cluster could serve as a catalyst for innovation, developing important new market opportunities and ensuring that the economic benefits that are generated flow directly back into the seafood sector?

Mairi Gougeon: I could not agree more with the points that Audrey Nicoll makes. I recognise the incredible work that Seafood Scotland does, as it is always looking to do more and is constantly

innovating. However, we might think about how much more it could do were we to get the full opportunities that should be coming to us through the fishing and coastal growth fund, rather than being left with the share that we have.

I look forward to meeting Audrey Nicoll and Seafood Scotland to hear more about the ocean cluster project, because it is exciting. I am looking forward to those discussions, but I reiterate that the poor allocation to Scotland from the UK fishing and coastal growth fund really restricts the Scottish Government's ability to support the seafood industry and to take more of those innovative steps.

Fishing Industry

6. Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support the Scottish fishing industry. (S6O-05095)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon): The Scottish Government is committed to building a thriving, sustainable fishing industry, recognising its importance to Scotland's economy. The marine fund Scotland provided £14 million this year to marine interests, including fishing. The United Kingdom Government's decision to allocate Scotland only 7.78 per cent of the fishing and coastal growth fund is unacceptable, and we will work to have the decision revisited. We negotiate with our fishing neighbours to manage shared stocks and promote the best interests of our industry. Our ambitious programme to modernise regulation, introduce our future catching policy, and improve inshore fisheries management underpins the sustainability of the industry.

Karen Adam: I note that the cabinet secretary does a lot of work, particularly in my constituency, and is praised for her collaborative work with the Scottish fishing sector.

Communities across the coast rely on a fairly funded Scottish fishing industry, but, given the UK Government's decision to allocate Scotland less than 8 per cent of the post-European Union fishing fund, despite our sector being the largest in the UK, does the cabinet secretary agree that it is only with the full powers of independence that Scotland's fishing industry can be properly prioritised?

Mairi Gougeon: I could not agree more with Karen Adam. When we compare Scotland with other European countries, there is a stark contrast. For example, Denmark has a smaller marine area and a smaller marine sector and it receives £25 million annually, compared with the updated but woeful allocation that we are receiving from the UK Government. That is why I will always argue

that the fishing industry's best interests and Scotland's interests more widely will be best represented when we are an independent country.

Tim Eagle (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I certainly do not agree that independence would help the Scottish fishing sector in the slightest, but I agree that the coastal grant fund simply was not enough. More importantly, there is far more to talk about in our wonderful Scottish fishing industry than I can ask about. Traditionally, every December, there has been a debate on fishing. I have been calling for that debate for a while. Will the cabinet secretary give me the assurance that, this December, we will finally have a big debate about the fishing industry on Government time?

Mairi Gougeon: Earlier this year, I believe that I committed to Tim Eagle that we would have a debate. I hope that he got the response to his parliamentary question, which also set out that we would be holding that debate. Of course, confirmation of that is subject to a Parliamentary Bureau decision, but I have committed to bringing forward the debate, and it will happen.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): The Fife fishing industry is deeply concerned that livelihoods will be disrupted by the offshore wind farms that are being built in the Forth without any compensation. Inch Cape, unlike the Neart na Gaoithe wind farm, is refusing to provide compensation for the mobile gear—the prawn boats—even though the cables are running through those fishing grounds, whereas the static gear is being compensated for. Will the cabinet secretary have a discussion with her colleagues to put together—at last—a compensation scheme for all the fishing industry, rather than just the statics?

Mairi Gougeon: Willie Rennie raises an important point that is, of course, impacting heavily on the industries in his constituency. I am more than happy to follow up with him and to have conversations with my colleagues to see what can be done in that regard. I understand that issues of compensation are currently private matters, but I appreciate the difficulties that he raises.

Agricultural Land (Change of Use)

7. Maurice Golden (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it monitors the change of use of agricultural land classified as grade 3 or above, including for infrastructure projects. (S6O-05096)

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): Scotland's fourth land use strategy is due to be published by March 2026. Throughout its development, we will work with stakeholders regarding the multiple demands that are placed on our land and the fine balances that must be found as we move forward. The national planning

framework 4 soils policy has safeguards in place for our best farm land and supports only in limited circumstances new development proposals on prime agricultural land or locally important agricultural land that is of lesser quality. The Scottish Government's food security unit also seeks to annually review available information about the use of land with a capability for agricultural grades 1 to 3.2 and to improve the data.

Maurice Golden: In recent years, a number of infrastructure projects, from energy transmission and battery storage to housing, have been proposed or developed on agricultural land. Although individual projects may have a limited impact and some, such as solar farms, may be reversible in the long term, does the minister share my concern that, if the Scotland-wide cumulative effect of such projects is not monitored, localised planning decisions could undermine our long-term food security?

Jim Fairlie: Maurice Golden makes a valid point, but the national planning framework 4 seeks to strike a balance between ensuring that land is protected and achieving other objectives relating to land use. The potential impacts on communities and nature, including prime agricultural land, are important considerations in the decision-making process, and all applications are subject to site-specific assessments.

I hope that the chamber has some confidence that we have the provisions in place to help protect the land.

New Farmers and Crofters (South Lanarkshire)

8. Davy Russell (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab): I apologise for being a wee bit late at the start.

To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support new farmers and crofters in South Lanarkshire. (S6O-05097)

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): We are committed to supporting new farmers in South Lanarkshire. The Farm Advisory Service provides peer-to-peer groups, mentoring and advice across a range of topics that are relevant to new entrants. They were one of the priority groups in the future farming investment scheme, and they can access national reserve payments. Wider national support is available through the farming opportunities for new entrants programme, the Scottish land matching service, the land-based pre-apprenticeship programme and the next generation practical training fund.

Unlike elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Scotland remains committed to direct support and additional voluntary coupled support. Finally, I

note that South Lanarkshire is not a crofting county, so there are no crofters there.

Davy Russell: Approximately 37 per cent of people in Scotland aged between 16 and 24 are economically inactive. A number of rural and semi-rural professions have historically been more prevalent than others in the public imagination, including forestry, farming, land management and agricultural engineering—the list is endless. However, those professions are associated with the highly marketable and transferable skills that we presently lack in this country. Does the minister agree that expanding the current offering of apprenticeships in the agricultural sector would help to preserve traditional farming practices and benefit the environment, while simultaneously bolstering the productive workforce to the benefit of not just the rural communities but, essentially, everyone?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): Before the minister responds, I remind him that we are dealing with supporting new farmers and crofters in South Lanarkshire.

Jim Fairlie: Indeed, Presiding Officer.

As someone who came from a town and spent a 30-year career in the agriculture sector, I absolutely take on board Davy Russell's points.

There are a number of ways in which people in South Lanarkshire can get involved in agriculture. The Scottish Government supports entry through the land-based pre-apprenticeship programme and the next generation practical training fund, which ensure that young people gain skills, experience and a route into agricultural careers. Further, organisations such as Ringlink Scotland and Lantra Scotland can help in that regard. There are any number of ways for people to get involved in farming in Scotland.

As part of our programme for government, we announced that we will ask all public authority landholders to look at their holdings to see whether there are opportunities for them to enable new entrants to get into farming.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Jamie Halcro Johnston has a supplementary question. Again, I point out that we are dealing with the principal question, which is on supporting new farmers and crofters in South Lanarkshire.

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Of course, Deputy Presiding Officer.

I declare an interest as a partner in a farming business.

Yesterday, in response to my concerns about how applications to the future farming investment scheme—including those from new entrants in

South Lanarkshire—were decided, the minister did not answer my question about whether artificial intelligence had been used in determining who did and who did not get the grant. Therefore, I ask again: was AI used when deciding on FFIS applications?

Jim Fairlie: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I can squeeze in a brief supplementary question from Douglas Ross, again with the same caveat.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Fortunately, Presiding Officer, I spoke to a farmer from Lanarkshire last night, and she echoed many of the same concerns that I have heard from farmers across the Highlands and Islands. She was an applicant for the FFIS. She is a young farmer and a new entrant. She is a tenant on a small farm and was looking for only £3,000. Like those of many people, her application was unsuccessful. If AI was not used—that farmer thought that it had been used, and unsuccessfully—why has the scheme rejected so many people? Why were so many ineligible? Does the minister accept that people are suggesting, as that farmer from Lanarkshire did last night, that it feels as though it would have been as well selling raffle tickets for the fund rather than asking people to expend the extreme effort and time that was needed to make complex submissions that were ultimately unsuccessful?

Jim Fairlie: I absolutely take on board Douglas Ross's point. There are a number of disappointed people in the country—I made that point yesterday when I answered questions.

I reiterate that AI was not used. One of the dangers of social media is that a mistruth can go around the world twice before the truth has got its laces tied. There was no AI used—let us be absolutely clear about that.

The number of people who have not been successful is a reflection of the number of people who applied. It has been a very successful scheme. We got £21 million out to farmers as soon as we possibly could, and we prioritised certain groups. It is a successful scheme, but it shows that, when we introduce other schemes, we have more targeted work to do to make sure that we get funding to as many people as possible.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes portfolio questions on rural affairs, land reform and islands. There will be a short pause before we move on to the next portfolio to allow front-bench teams to change positions.

Health and Social Care

National Health Service (Opinion Poll)

1. **Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to a recent poll that states that a majority of people in Scotland think the NHS is worse now than it was a decade ago. (S6O-05098)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): There is no doubt that, as is the case in other countries, our health and social care services continue to face challenges, not least post Covid. However, with record funding and a focus on reform and renewal, we are empowering our NHS to deliver high-quality care to people across this country. We are investing a record £21.7 billion this year, targeting areas with the longest waits, tackling backlogs and ensuring that patients get the care that they need faster.

Our plans are delivering results. Last year, for example, the NHS performed a record number of hip and knee operations, and new figures show that the number of people on NHS waiting lists has fallen.

Jamie Halcro Johnston: In his statement to Parliament on urgent care in the north of Skye, Neil Gray sought to assure local people that he would seek continued improvement. However, a freedom of information response obtained by SOS NHS campaigners showed that there were no advanced nurse practitioners on duty at Portree community hospital on 53 of the 84 nights between 1 July and 22 September 2025. That includes 6 August, when thousands of people attended the Skye highland games in Portree.

NHS staff are being left to work under extreme pressure to deliver on ministerial promises that ministers are not providing them with the resources to deliver on. Is it any wonder that, when communities such as those in the north of Skye get broken promise after broken promise from the Scottish Government, confidence in the future of our NHS is so low?

Neil Gray: As I set out in my proactive statement to Parliament, the situation in Skye is improving because there has been increased workforce development and support for increased employment in Portree hospital to ensure that Sir Lewis Ritchie's review can be honoured. I was able to meet local residents to provide reassurances on the commitment from NHS Highland of continued improvement locally.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members have a number of supplementary questions, and I will try to take all of them.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): One group of my constituents who are undoubtedly seeing a worse performance from the NHS than 10 years ago are those who are seeking gender healthcare from Sandyford, which serves not only NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde but seven other health board areas. Public Health Scotland data that was published last week shows that some 4,000 people are on the waiting list, with fewer than 50 first appointments a year. Can the cabinet secretary give my constituents any reassurance that some dramatic change is on its way, to ensure that that woeful performance turns around?

Neil Gray: I acknowledge Mr Harvie's point and the consistency with which he has raised it, including in our regular one-to-one discussions, for which I am very grateful.

I also recognise the Public Health Scotland figures that he has quoted with regard to the waiting times at the Sandyford and wider services, which are undoubtedly a challenge for us. I, too, have constituents who are in a similar situation, so I recognise the pressure that that puts on them and on staff. The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health is investing in areas to explore how we can alleviate those pressures on waiting times.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): In 2024, there were 50,000 private hospital admissions in Scotland. That was a record high. In the first quarter of 2025, there was another record high. The figure has gone up by 42 per cent in the past five years. The British Medical Association's survey was clear that the majority of people are choosing that option because the NHS waiting lists are just so long. Is the cabinet secretary not concerned that his Government is privatising the NHS by stealth?

Neil Gray: No, absolutely not. I agreed with much of what Willie Rennie had to say until that final part. The basic principles that this Government is taking to reform and renewal work in the health service are based on ensuring that our health service continues to be free at the point of use and publicly owned. Of course, I am concerned by the fact that people are choosing to go through private healthcare. I want to give people the assurance that activity levels are up—and up substantially—because of the investment that we have made and the incredible dedication of staff, and that waiting times are falling. Progress has been made and the plan is working.

The figures for private healthcare in Scotland stand in stark contrast to the usage of private healthcare elsewhere in the United Kingdom. That is because we want to protect and enhance NHS capacity in Scotland.

Davy Russell (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab): The survey highlights some mismanagement under the Scottish National Party Administration, which is no surprise to any of us. I have a constituent who received a double mastectomy in 2017 and is still awaiting reconstructive surgery in 2025. That is eight years of waiting, with one excuse after another and the Government resetting the clock on several occasions during the process. Does the minister agree that the creative accounting that has been applied to waiting lists is thoroughly letting my constituents down?

Neil Gray: That is not what is happening. I want not just to sympathise and empathise, but to make sure that we provide the NHS capacity to allow the member's constituent to be seen as quickly as possible. I have met other members—notably Dr Gulhane—with constituents who face the same issue. There is a challenge, because some of the theatres that are being used for reconstructive surgery are also being used for the first part of the treatment for people with cancer, ensuring that it gets done first. However, I am cognisant that reconstructive surgery for women with breast cancer is also part of their treatment journey and must be afforded timeously. That is why I am asking boards to consider all that they can do to ensure that it is done as fast as possible.

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): I remind members that I am a practising nurse in the NHS.

The poll to which Mr Halcro Johnston referred also shows that 88 per cent of people believe that healthcare should be free. The Tories and Labour have been all too happy to carve out the NHS in England to private companies. Will the cabinet secretary reaffirm that this SNP Government will always protect the founding principles of the NHS, which are that it is publicly owned and free at the point of need—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary—

Clare Haughey: —and will he ensure that it remains well funded and prepared to meet the requirements of all who use it?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Apologies, Ms Haughey. I thought that you had finished.

Neil Gray: I absolutely agree with Clare Haughey. Our position could not be clearer: the founding principles of our national health service—that it is publicly owned, publicly operated and free at the point of need—are sacrosanct. That is why our backing of our NHS with record funding—I note that Labour and the Conservatives refused to support that record funding investment for our NHS during the budget vote—comes with a focus on reform. Such reform empowers our NHS to deliver high-quality care to people across the

country, and it includes the £25.5 million of additional funding that was announced this week to allow boards to deliver more appointments and procedures.

NHS Grampian (Procurement Practices)

2. Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of reported concerns regarding patient safety at NHS Grampian arising from faulty sterilising equipment, whether an independent investigation into the procurement practices will be held. (S6O-05099)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): I expect that a comprehensive service review of NHS Grampian's central decontamination service will be carried out. That review will examine the decontamination process and the supporting infrastructure—including the plant, machinery and engineering services—that underpins safe and effective operations.

Murdo Fraser: My whistleblowing constituent Jason Donnelly had his company's contract with NHS Grampian cancelled after he raised concerns about patient safety. The First Minister is on record, on two separate occasions, calling for an independent investigation into those matters on the basis of evidence that was provided following freedom of information requests. It is clear that there has been maladministration on the part of NHS Grampian. How will the Scottish Government provide redress, in accordance with the Scottish public finance manual, for my constituent's company for the unjustified wrong that was done to it?

Neil Gray: I thank Murdo Fraser for his question and for the correspondence on behalf of his constituent. I have corresponded with both him and the First Minister on the matter in a constituency capacity.

Mr Fraser refers to the situation relating to events in 2018, which involved a different service—endoscopy decontamination—and not to the situation that NHS Grampian is currently facing, which is to do with decontamination elsewhere. At my insistence, officials have met Mr Donnelly in order to explore whether anything further can be done to support him in his position. The advice that I have provided to Mr Fraser, on his behalf, still stands.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Karen Adam has a supplementary question, which should be related to the principal question, please.

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): Will the cabinet secretary reaffirm that the Scottish Government is committed to putting patient safety at the heart of our NHS service delivery? What conversations has he had with NHS Grampian about its recovery?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I ask the cabinet secretary to focus his response on the topic of the question that was placed in the *Business Bulletin*.

Neil Gray: The recovery of NHS Grampian's services has been hindered by the situation with decontamination services, and patient safety remains our top priority in regard to both.

I met the chair and chief executive of NHS Grampian in October to discuss the work that the health board is doing to explore and develop a new improvement plan, so that people receive the right care at the right time. The Scottish Government has also established an assurance board to support NHS Grampian and to provide assurance that an appropriate plan is developed.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Question 3 is from Ash Regan, who joins us remotely.

Mental Health Support (Vulnerable Women and Girls)

3. Ash Regan (Edinburgh Eastern) (Ind): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to improve the provision of mental health support for vulnerable women and girls with complex post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related conditions, including where this is the result of commercial sexual exploitation in prostitution. (S6O-05100)

The Minister for Social Care and Mental Wellbeing (Tom Arthur): The Scottish Government recognises the challenges that vulnerable women and girls face with complex PTSD and trauma-related conditions, including those that are a result of commercial sexual exploitation. We have funded CSE Aware to provide training and awareness sessions to the wider public and the third sector, including across health services, to ensure that professionals across all settings have the skills and confidence to enable them to respond in the best way. We are committed to ensuring timely access to high-quality mental health services and are working closely with national health service boards and local authorities to expand trauma-informed psychological support for women and girls who are affected by trauma and exploitation.

Ash Regan: Evidence shows that women who are exploited through prostitution experience extraordinarily high rates of complex PTSD, and the trauma experienced is comparable to that suffered by state torture survivors and combat veterans. Symptoms include emotional dysregulation, identity disruption and lasting relational difficulties.

Although services such as the Anchor service in Glasgow and the Rivers centre in Edinburgh provide excellent care, specialist complex PTSD

assessment and recovery support services remain quite scarce across Scotland. Will the Scottish Government commit to investing in long-term, trauma-informed recovery programmes, specialist complex PTSD diagnosis and practitioner training? Will it commit to recognising such exploitation as gender-based violence that impacts those women and girls deeply, and to ensuring that they get the support and sustained interventions that they need?

Tom Arthur: I thank Ash Regan for raising those matters in her substantive and supplementary questions. As she will be aware, there has been significant investment in our mental health services and, through our national trauma transformation programme, there has been significant and sustained investment with partners across the public sector to support a trauma-informed approach.

Nonetheless, the matters that Ms Regan raises are extremely serious. I want to assure myself that, collectively—both in the Government and with our partners in local government—we are doing everything that we possibly can to provide support. I therefore undertake to explore the matter in more detail. I would be happy to engage with the member directly if she would find that useful. I will direct my officials to provide me with further briefing on the matter, and I will be happy to write to the member as a means of following up.

NHS Grampian (Financial Scrutiny)

4. Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to provide financial scrutiny over NHS Grampian. (S6O-05101)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): NHS Grampian has been escalated to stage 4 of the NHS Scotland support and intervention framework, which allows it to receive support from the Scottish Government that is commensurate with its challenges.

As a result of that escalation, the Scottish Government has set up an NHS Grampian assurance board, which frequently challenges NHS Grampian's financial management and position. We have also provided funding for an interim director of improvement and a diagnostic report on NHS Grampian's financial challenges, and we meet its representatives weekly to enable us to monitor progress against financial targets.

Liam Kerr: Yesterday's damning Audit Scotland report warned that contending with a £68 million overspend in 2025-26 will require NHS Grampian to make big changes to its health and social care provision. The full implications of the failures of the Scottish National Party Government and NHS Grampian to manage the finances remain

unclear—including whether there will be further delays to the Aberdeen and north centre for haematology, oncology and radiotherapy, which is known as the ANCHOR, and the promised national treatment centre. I have a straight question for the cabinet secretary: will the financial troubles delay the ANCHOR further, and when will we get the national treatment centre that we were promised?

Neil Gray: No. Progress continues to be made on the delivery of the Baird family hospital and the ANCHOR, and I very much look forward to the additional capacity that that will bring.

On the national treatment centre programme, Liam Kerr will be aware of the capital position that the Government faces on the health portfolio in particular. There is currently a pause, other than in areas that are currently in development or set out under ministerial priority. However, we await the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget statement later this month, and I remain hopeful that, through its provisions, there might be increased capital investment in our economy that would allow us to take forward those projects much more quickly.

Audrey Nicoll (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): I welcome the cabinet secretary's continued focus on NHS Grampian and the significant financial challenges that it faces. It is vital that patients in my constituency receive the care that they need, when they need it. Will the cabinet secretary further outline the action that the Scottish Government has undertaken, and continues to undertake, to stabilise and support NHS Grampian to ensure that patients are able to access the care that they need, when they need it?

Neil Gray: I absolutely agree with Audrey Nicoll. In this financial year, 2025-26, NHS Scotland boards received increased investment in baseline funding. NHS Grampian received more than £1.34 billion. An additional £5.9 million will drive improvements in NHS Grampian's accident and emergency performance by supporting initiatives that shift the balance of care and reduce hospital occupancy, including work on hospital at home and discharge without delay.

NHS Grampian was escalated to stage 4 of the support and intervention framework in May this year, and an assurance board is now in place. That assurance board has been working with NHS Grampian to develop the whole-system unscheduled care plan and will ensure that the additional funding delivers the improvements that Audrey Nicoll is looking for.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Too many of the NHS Grampian patients that I represent in Moray are not getting care when they need it. I have heard from a family whose husband

and father suffered a heart attack at the weekend. He presented himself to A and E at Dr Gray's hospital. He stayed in A and E for four days. There was standing room only. Patients were in beds in the corridors outside it. At one point on Saturday, there were six ambulances with patients in them outside A and E because there was no capacity to take them inside.

That has been going on for far too long. While the Government is looking at the financial implications of the NHS Grampian recovery plan, what does the cabinet secretary say to that family and so many others who are not getting the care that they need and deserve—indeed, the care that the staff want to give them? Time after time, they face chronic delays such as the one that that family has suffered.

Neil Gray: I would welcome Douglas Ross's sharing information with me in writing, if he can, about the situation that his constituent has faced, which, on the face of it, sounds as though it involved an unnecessary and unacceptable delay, for which I apologise.

In response to Audrey Nicoll I set out the improvement plan that is in place to support the unscheduled care improvement that is required. Having made the point repeatedly in the chamber—in particular, to colleagues who represent the north-east—I have been very clear that the financial rigour that requires to be observed at NHS Grampian should not and must not get in the way of the improvements to patient care that I expect. I have made that point absolutely clear to NHS Grampian as well as to assurance board colleagues.

Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab): Proper and efficient scrutiny of health board finances is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our health service. This week, Audit Scotland revealed that NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the health board that serves many of my constituents, owes nearly £130 million in loans and is on the brink of collapse. It has the highest outstanding loan amount of any Scottish health board.

Can the cabinet secretary provide any reassurance to people in my region that immediate action will be taken to recover NHS Ayrshire and Arran's financial position?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member's supplementary has gone a bit wide. The question was about NHS Grampian.

Neil Gray: I will briefly say that I expect Professor Gordon James, the new interim chief executive, to do exactly that.

General Practitioner Walk-in Centres

5. Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it will determine where the 15 pilots for the planned GP walk-in centres will be located. (S6O-05102)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): Improving access to primary care is a key priority for this Government. It builds on our on-going commitment through the service renewal framework to shift more care into community settings and make services more accessible for patients.

As part of that, we will develop options to improve access to primary care, including local walk-in models, which will be open Monday to Sunday and provide more flexibility for patients. We will develop those proposals first as a pilot model that will complement—not duplicate or replace—current core general practice. The Scottish Government will set out further details as those plans develop.

Kenneth Gibson: Combined, Ayrshire's three towns of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston have 33,000 residents. With high levels of deprivation, it is one of the largest populations in Scotland without a hospital. North Ayrshire also has Scotland's lowest healthy life expectancy—a shockingly low 52 years.

Before the financial crash, an ambulatory care and diagnostic centre was discussed. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the three towns should be prioritised for a pilot GP walk-in centre? When will members be informed of which areas have been chosen?

Neil Gray: I very much hear the case that Kenneth Gibson is making on behalf of his constituents. Like him, I share the aim of reducing health inequalities, as set out in the population health and service renewal frameworks, which I think is what he is driving at in his question.

By ensuring that services are designed and delivered in ways that are inclusive, equitable and responsive to all communities' needs, the aim is to target support at those who face the greatest barriers to accessing care because of geography, socioeconomic status, disability, ethnicity or other factors. Success will result in people accessing care more quickly, closer to home and more equitably. With national health service boards and primary care delivery partners, we are developing GP walk-in proposals that will reflect local needs. I will respond not only to Mr Gibson but to other colleagues on that in due course.

Sandesh Gulhane (Glasgow) (Con): I declare an interest as a practising NHS GP.

The Glasgow Local Medical Committee has raised concerns about the First Minister's recent

announcement to establish GP walk-in centres, not least of which is the risk that they pose to continuity of care. Like the LMC, I am deeply concerned about the lack of clarity that is provided around the proposal, including in the answer to Kenneth Gibson.

Surely a lot of planning had already gone into the policy before the announcement, yet when I wrote to the First Minister, I received no information on when the walk-in centres will be delivered, where they will be placed, how they will be staffed and how much they will cost. That strengthens the view that the policy is nothing more than an election stunt.

Perhaps the cabinet secretary can disprove that charge and tell me when the walk-in centres will be delivered, where they will be placed, how they will be staffed and how much each will cost, because that work must have been done.

Neil Gray: Work is being done, and I will be more than happy to disprove Sandesh Gulhane's cynicism when further details can be published.

Sandesh Gulhane raised the LMC's concerns about continuity of care. I am confident that the LMC will be more reassured of late, given that the Government has committed to the single biggest investment in core GP services—£531 million over the next three years. There will be increases in GP recruitment and faster adoption of innovation, and I am confident that that will be welcomed by GPs across the country.

Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab): We must pay attention to Dr Iain Morrison of British Medical Association Scotland, who has pointed out that the existing walk-in centres do not necessarily demonstrate good value for money, which we must keep thinking about. On the back of last week's announcement, which Neil Gray just referred to, can he confirm how much money GP practices will see before the election next May?

Neil Gray: Yes. The budget will contain an additional £98 million for general practice, pending the decision that the Parliament takes following the budget process. I am confident that Labour members, including Martin Whitfield, will support the budget, given the incredibly important investment that it will provide.

I am also confident—not least because we will engage with GPs and organisations such as the BMA—that, although models elsewhere in the United Kingdom have failed, we can make the system work here.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Question 6 was not lodged.

Walk-in Primary Care Clinics (Impact on Health Inequalities)

7. Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential impact that the proposed 15 walk-in primary care clinics will have on health inequalities. (S6O-05104)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): Improving access to primary care is a key Government priority, as we build on our on-going commitment through the service renewal framework to shift more care into community settings and make services more accessible for patients. As part of that, we will develop options to improve access to primary care, including through local walk-in models, which will be open Monday to Sunday and will provide more flexibility for patients. We will develop the proposals first through a pilot model, which will complement, not duplicate, current core general practice. The Government will set out further details as the plans develop.

Pauline McNeill: Has the cabinet secretary looked at the evidence from England that shows that walk-in centres led by general practitioners were used primarily by younger, more affluent patients with minor self-limiting conditions? Instead of improving access to core general practice or easing pressure on accident and emergency services, such walk-in centres might, in fact, exacerbate health inequalities by directing investment towards relatively healthy individuals. I am sure that the Royal College of General Practitioners will have raised that concern with the cabinet secretary. It has argued that that approach does not necessarily offer the best value for money, and it has called for greater investment in core general practice services. Before the Government proceeds with any new models of care, perhaps it should first strengthen core general practice to improve access and tackle health inequalities.

Neil Gray: I confirm that we are doing both. Pending the Parliament's support for the Government's budget, we will, over the next three years, invest £531 million—the single biggest investment in core GP services—to expand those services and employ more GPs so that more people can be seen in general practice. We will also provide more flexibility for patients to ensure that they can get through the front door of the national health service as easily as possible. That is why we are piloting the walk-in clinics. I have been heartened by my engagement, including with deep-end general practices, on how we can use that model to tackle health inequalities, and that engagement will continue.

Baby Loss (Support)

8. Emma Roddick (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure comprehensive emotional, bereavement and practical support is accessible for people who have experienced baby loss. (S6O-05105)

The Minister for Public Health and Women's Health (Jenni Minto): The loss of a baby, no matter at what stage of pregnancy, has a profound and lasting impact on women and their families, so I offer my deepest sympathy to anyone who has experienced baby loss.

Care and support should be tailored to individual circumstances. For most people, that will come via health boards or third sector organisations, but a small number of people might require specialist mental health services via maternity and neonatal psychological intervention services. Our continued investment since 2019 has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of services that are available. In addition, national health service boards are implementing the national bereavement care pathway for pregnancy and baby loss.

Emma Roddick: I have been supporting a constituent who experienced a very traumatic miscarriage. Many of the difficulties that she faced arose from miscommunication or, in some respects, a total lack of communication. She was not made aware of much of the support that is available to her.

Although I recognise the extensive work that the minister mentioned to improve miscarriage care standards, in partnership with those who know exactly what it means when we get that wrong, it is troubling to hear of instances in which those standards have not been put into practice. What further steps can be taken to ensure that health boards have the necessary resources to provide comprehensive training for staff who work in dedicated early pregnancy units, so that those who experience baby loss, wherever they are, receive the support and compassion that they deserve?

Jenni Minto: I thank Emma Roddick for raising the issue in the chamber. I recently attended a round table in the Parliament led by the baby loss charity Held In Our Hearts. It was attended by those who had experienced baby loss, by researchers and, importantly, by health boards. It was a very powerful event. To enable the best support for those families, a combination of all those stakeholders, working together, is needed. Earlier this year, I was pleased to announce the delivery framework for miscarriage care in Scotland, which is supported by £1.5 million in funding. The framework sets the expectation that

NHS boards ensure that all staff receive training in providing compassionate, culturally competent care after miscarriage and other early pregnancy complications.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes portfolio questions on health and social care. There will be a brief pause before we move on to the next item of business in order to allow front-bench teams to change positions.

Maternity Services

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Liam McArthur): The next item of business is a debate on motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on Scotland's maternity services. I invite members who wish to participate to press their request-to-speak buttons.

14:56

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): The birth of a child is probably the most significant and special event for any mother, but in Scotland today, sadly, that is not always the case. Last week, the BBC's "Disclosure" programme reported on the tragic case of Jacqui Hunter. Jacqui died in childbirth from an amniotic fluid embolism. She had been given eight times the recommended dose of the drug used to bring on labour. An NHS Tayside review found that higher doses of that drug increase the risk of an amniotic fluid embolism and that the incorrect dose

"must be considered as a major contributing factor to AFE and subsequent death".

The panel also said that Jacqui should have been informed of the medication error. Her grieving husband, Lori, only found out after her death. Thankfully, deaths such as Jacqui's are rare. However, for far too many women, childbirth can be a difficult experience. As Lynsey Hamilton, a maternity campaigner, said when talking about her experience of pre-eclampsia:

"You will see the headlines and hear the statistics. Behind them there are families, mothers and babies who are being let down throughout Scotland due to the lack of funding and investment in maternity services."

Last month, I travelled to Wick in Caithness, where I heard stories of mothers being forced to travel more than 100 miles to give birth, despite Wick having an amazing midwife-led maternity unit. I heard from the Caithness Health Action Team about a mother expecting twins who gave birth to her first child in Golspie and then continued the journey in two separate ambulances for the second twin to be born in Inverness. Nine in 10 women in Caithness give birth in hospital in Inverness—many of them are induced—but, despite the efforts of midwives, that does not mean that they receive acceptable maternity care. That is because Raigmore hospital is bursting at the seams. Women at the start of labour are told to go home and wait, but as home is more than 100 miles away, they end up wandering the streets of Inverness, sometimes at night.

I heard from Ashlyn, who arrived at the hospital to be induced but was told that it was too busy and was asked if she could come back two hours later.

That went on and on and, in the end, she waited more than 12 hours to be induced.

Raigmore hospital's maternity unit was supposed to be upgraded, but the Scottish Government paused the funding days after the unit was approved for development.

Across Scotland, our rural and remote communities want young families to stay and thrive. Instead, mothers are being forced to choose between healthcare and the place that they call home. In Stranraer, the closure of local maternity services means that expectant mothers are forced to travel 140 miles on a round-trip to Dumfries for care.

Claire Fleming, who is based near Stranraer, had children in 2012, 2015, 2019 and 2021, so she has seen the decline in maternity services throughout her four pregnancies. Her first daughter was, unfortunately, stillborn, but Claire says that she received outstanding support. In 2015, when Claire had her second child, she had a named midwife, and she had to go to Dumfries for an appointment only once. By 2021, when she had her fourth child, and extreme morning sickness, she had to make the 140-mile return journey for every single appointment—even appointments that were just five minutes long. The treatment in that instance was a drip in her arm. As Claire has asked many times, why could that not have been done closer to home? Women in remote and rural areas are right to call that out.

We know that services can be better. Orkney, which I know is close to the cabinet secretary's heart, may be one of the most remote parts of Scotland, but its maternity unit has met the UNICEF gold standard. The unit is run by midwives, who are supported by consultant obstetricians, but mums know that in an emergency they will be transported via helicopter to Aberdeen. There are around 180 births a year in Orkney but, unlike in Caithness, around 80 per cent of them happen at the local maternity unit.

There is more that we can and should do in rural and remote areas, but the centralisation of services for mothers and babies is a nationwide issue. Families from Dundee to Lanarkshire have raised concerns about their specialist neonatal units being downgraded. Of course everybody wants the sickest, most premature babies to receive the highest standard of care. "The Best Start: Five-Year Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care 2017–2024 Report" outlined the new model in 2017, and it recommended up to five intensive neonatal units. However, the Scottish Government has decided to deliver the minimum of three, meaning that women could be separated from their babies or forced to travel hundreds of miles just to be with them. The Scottish Government

must listen to local families and clinicians, working with them, not against them.

The failures in maternity care are not just about geography. Last week, an inspection report highlighted failures at the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh maternity unit, which is less than four miles down the road from where we are now. Expectant mums are waiting as long as 29 hours to be induced, and they have been sent to other hospitals because there simply was not enough room. Only 13 per cent of the charts for patients' essential observations were fully completed. Women were left alone in pain, with no call system to ask for help. There were delays in the escalation of care, and midwives were in tears because of the pressure.

An unannounced inspection in Ninewells earlier this year painted a similarly damning picture. Across Scotland, women are being let down at one of the times in their lives when they are most vulnerable.

I heard from Julie Keegan, a national health service nurse in Glasgow who works in intensive care, who noticed that her newborn son Mason was hypothermic, listless and struggling to breathe. She rushed to the city's Royal hospital for children, where Mason died six hours later. A significant adverse event review later found that his temperature had been recorded as 35 degrees, when it was in fact so low that it was unrecordable, while other records had not been completed, leading to a failure to recognise just how sick he was.

Julie believes that a toxic workplace culture played a part in Mason's death, and she backs a national investigation into maternity and neonatal services. She said:

"It is a complete whitewash. They should be working with families, not fighting them, to ensure that this never happens again."

Too often, the response to such tragedies is a veil of secrecy. What is more, Mason's tragic death is not Julie's only experience of poor neonatal or maternity services. Earlier this year, expecting another child, she was given an appointment to be induced on a Monday. She ended up waiting for four days, because the maternity unit was short staffed.

Experiences such as those are deeply distressing for the mothers and families involved. They are also distressing for staff. Across Scotland, front-line NHS staff are overworked, understaffed and burnt out. The Ninewells inspectors found a 33 per cent shortfall in the number of experienced midwives. The NHS Lothian report found that midwives at the RIE were "emotional and tearful" while they talked about the

“overwhelming feeling of helplessness, frustration and worry for not only patients, but staff safety.”

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Jackie Baillie: I am happy to do so.

Finlay Carson: Although patient safety is paramount, does the member accept that the reduction in the number of midwives through poor workplace management has reduced the choice that women have? Women should have a choice about where to give birth that is not based only on safety.

Jackie Baillie: I agree—understaffing is one of the key problems in some of the distressing cases that I outlined and also in being able to provide safe midwifery-led services locally. I will come on to deal with that issue.

Research conducted by Labour found that, in 2024 alone, there were 333,296 unfilled nurse and midwifery shifts. Behind those figures are caring, experienced staff who are forced to make impossible choices due to the Scottish National Party’s managed decline of our NHS. Year after year, the Royal College of Midwives has repeatedly warned about workplace shortages and the lack of opportunity for midwives to develop their skills.

Finlay Carson might remember that, last year, there was the scandal of newly trained midwives facing unemployment. The Scottish Government had spent millions of pounds on their training but could not find the funding to give them jobs—at a time when there were thousands of vacancies.

We have no workforce plan, skills going to rot, mothers not getting the support that they need and experienced front-line staff going off sick or retiring with burnout. Midwives and other front-line staff are trying their best, but they are being set up to fail. I welcome the Scottish Government’s decision to set up a task force to take immediate action, but, by itself, that is not enough. The Government is littered with task forces and recommendations that have not been implemented.

We need a national investigation, not in place of the task force but alongside it, starting now. That is what the families want and what this Parliament should deliver. We need maternity services that wrap their arms around women and babies, rather than expecting women to wait for days on end to be induced because it is more convenient to do it that way. We need transparency, not secrecy. We need the duty of candour to be effective, rather than only words on a page. We need more than three specialist neonatal services to cover the diverse geography of Scotland. We need to learn from the best international practice, to deliver the highest standards of remote and rural care. We

need a proper workforce plan that enshrines our investment in the next generation of midwives. That will pay off, so that maternity units are properly staffed. We need to ensure that we hold those at the top accountable, while fostering a workplace culture where staff feel supported and there is openness, transparency and willingness to learn from mistakes.

The United Kingdom Labour Government has delivered record funding for Scotland’s public services—an extra £5.2 billion to spend in this year alone. A fraction of that would have made a difference to maternity services. This is about investing in the next generation, in women’s health, in our rural communities and in Scotland’s future.

Today, MSPs of all parties have a chance to listen to the mums, dads, doctors and experts, and to agree to a national investigation into these crucial services so that mothers and babies can be safe and get the treatment that they need. *[Interruption.]* I am glad that a baby is having the last word.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Unfortunately, the baby cannot move the motion, Ms Baillie, so I would be grateful if you could do so. *[Laughter.]*

Jackie Baillie: I move,

That the Parliament is alarmed by the serious patient safety issues raised in recent inspection reports of maternity services, and calls on the Scottish Government to launch a national investigation into the design and delivery of maternity and neonatal services across Scotland.

15:09

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray): I thank Jackie Baillie for lodging the motion for debate. I agree with a substantial amount of what she has put on the record today.

I provided a statement in the Parliament last week in response to the recent concerning reports on maternity services in Scotland. I am aware that families have been impacted by NHS failures and that stories were covered by the BBC “Disclosure” documentary. I have just met one of those families; they are in the public gallery. I put on record my deepest condolences to them and give my thanks for their bravery in speaking up about their personal experiences. I know how difficult that has been, but it helps to ensure that we can learn and make improvements. I am genuinely grateful to them for that, and I would be happy to meet them, if that is possible.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): Does the cabinet secretary agree that the experience of women who miscarry needs to be looked at, too? One of my constituents had to wait while two parts of the NHS argued over who should see her, because her pregnancy was at the 12-week

point—too late for the early pregnancy unit but too early for the triage unit. She then had to return several times for checks on her pregnancy hormone levels, which were not reducing. She was in an area alongside pregnant women but she had miscarried her baby. Will the cabinet secretary take action now to ensure that our constituents in Lothian get the change that is urgently needed?

Neil Gray: I absolutely agree with Sarah Boyack. I expect that to be part of the improvements that need to come through from Healthcare Improvement Scotland's review, but it can also be considered as part of the task force that Ms Minto is chairing.

Sandesh Gulhane (Glasgow) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for taking my intervention. I declare an interest as a practising NHS general practitioner.

Repeated surveys show that obstetric and gynaecology departments have the highest level of bullying of any specialty. Given that culture comes from the top, is it any wonder that there is a culture of secrecy when significant errors happen? It takes brave women to stand up and speak to shine a light on the problems.

Neil Gray: I made it absolutely clear in response to questions from Dr Gulhane's colleague Stephen Kerr last week about my very clear expectation for the culture in our NHS, which is reinforced by what we found in the report by Healthcare Improvement Scotland regarding NHS Lothian. I have put that on the record. I will not tolerate poor culture, and that has been made clear to NHS board chief executives.

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): Will Neil Gray take an intervention?

Neil Gray: I need to make some progress, so I hope that members will forgive me. I will see whether I can come to Mr Kerr later.

I know that members of the Parliament will agree that the safety and wellbeing of mothers, babies and staff must be our priority. I also want to reassure pregnant women and their families that our maternity and neonatal services are safe, although I will talk about situations in which that has not been the case.

Women in Scotland have the right to choose where to give birth, and those who choose to give birth in our hospitals can be assured that they are the safest possible place to give birth, with access to the best possible care. Wherever women choose to give birth, whether in an obstetric-led unit, a midwifery-led unit or at home, they can and should expect the highest quality of care that is tailored to their needs. That is why I accept the initial part of Ms Baillie's motion and why I am

sympathetic to the majority of Mr Gulhane's amendment.

As I said in my statement last week, I share concerns about Healthcare Improvement Scotland's report into maternity services in Lothian and those raised by the BBC "Disclosure" documentary. The findings are completely unacceptable, and it is right that the Parliament takes a firm position that improvements must be made urgently, which I welcome the opportunity for today.

I also recognise—not least following the conversation that I have just had with Lori Quate and Willie Rennie, for which I am very grateful to them both—that trust has been broken between families who have been let down and the NHS. I am determined to ensure that families have the opportunity to feed into the improvements that we want to see and to share their experiences candidly. I am therefore exploring whether that can be done through the HIS inspection process. I will also ask the Patient Safety Commissioner for Scotland for her views on how we do that most effectively when I meet her next week.

Pam Duncan-Glancy (Glasgow) (Lab): Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Neil Gray: I will try to come back to Pam Duncan-Glancy. I want to make progress, but I also want to ensure that colleagues have the opportunity to have their say.

I will not repeat all the points that I set out in my statement last week, but I want to be clear from the outset that the Government remains absolutely open and willing to do everything necessary to improve the services that women and babies use across Scotland. I have been very clear with NHS Lothian about the urgent improvements that I expect to see before the end of this year, and the First Minister reiterated the importance of boards responding timeously to any concerns that were raised about maternity services when we met NHS chief executives last week.

Members will be aware that I intend to convene a meeting with NHS Lothian's chief executive and MSPs from across the chamber so that they can ask directly any questions that they might have. I hope that we can use the debate to agree the need for members of all parties—the Government included—to work collaboratively together to bring about the improvements that we all want to see.

The Government's amendment, in my name, is intended to set out clearly that we are open to a wider national review of maternity services. However, a series of local inspections of every maternity unit in Scotland is already under way. It is right that those inspections should continue at pace so that we can make immediate improvements, instead of initiating a review in

place of those, which would be potentially lengthy and require us to wait for the findings to identify where changes can be made.

Jackie Baillie: A national investigation would not be in place of the work that is going on—it would go alongside that and would recognise that this issue does not just affect one hospital or one maternity service but is a Scotland-wide problem.

Neil Gray: I recognise the point that Jackie Baillie makes. I believe that the HIS inspection regime allows us to get into greater detail at local levels and allows us to consider those reports through the task force. Should that task force recommend a national review, I would be more than happy to accede to that request.

The action that we are taking is robust. It ensures that there can be an immediate, live response to those concerns, and we can see the improvement as the challenges are unearthed through Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): I understand the cabinet secretary's point, which is that he wants immediate action. However, in his statement last week, he set out a series of investigations and HIS reports that have been conducted over many years, yet we still had that "Disclosure" documentary and that devastating impact. He must surely recognise that the current system of investigation is just not enough on its own.

Neil Gray: I disagree. Healthcare Improvement Scotland inspections have only begun this year to uncover the challenges that we have seen in Tayside and in Lothian. They have come as a result of the previous neonatal investigations, and the Government accepted the need for that acute maternity inspection process. That is what HIS is currently embarked on. We expect a significant number of additional inspections to take place before March—eight, I believe—which will give us good coverage across the country and a full picture of the situation. I very much understand the situation that Jackie Baillie and Willie Rennie outline, but the HIS report regime will give us that full picture.

Pam Duncan-Glancy: My colleague Marie Tidball MP has started a campaign about the experience of disabled people during maternity on the back of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine report finding that disabled women are 44 per cent more likely to have a stillbirth than non-disabled women. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that any investigation that takes place will be inclusive of all women, including disabled women?

Neil Gray: It absolutely has to be, of course; there is no equivocation on that.

The new Scottish maternity and neonatal task force, which I announced last week, will review the findings of the HIS inspections. Two of those inspections have already taken place in Tayside and Lothian; they are complete and reported. HIS has committed to performing eight NHS acute maternity inspections by March 2026. Following the review of the findings and recommendations of those inspections, if the task force recommends a wider national review, I confirm to the Parliament that the Government will take that forward, giving full consideration to staff and patient welfare. I hope that that makes it clear to members that the Government is not shutting down the prospect of a review, but that the processes that are already under way should conclude in the first instance.

Stephen Kerr: Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Neil Gray: I do not know how much time I have left.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have used up all the time in hand. I expect to extend the debate a little, given the nature of the discussions, but, as I say, we are over time.

Neil Gray: If Mr Kerr could be pithy, I will take the intervention.

Stephen Kerr: I will be very pithy. Despite what the cabinet secretary says, I cannot see how, without a national inquiry, we can get to the issues of culture that he spoke so strongly about last week. It is one thing to make pronouncements but another to bring change about. Without a national inquiry and a set of recommendations to do just that, how do we proceed?

Neil Gray: I have already said that, should the HIS inspections that we are getting before March, and the task force, recommend that course, that is what I will do. I believe that that culture has been exposed in the HIS inspections; we saw that that was central to the criticism in the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh report.

I will not tolerate that—I expect to see improvements in the culture, and we are seeing management improvements and changes as a result. That is why I have confidence in the situation that is being developed through the HIS inspections. If that changes in any way, I am open to what Stephen Kerr suggests.

With regard to Mr Rennie's amendment, as I said in my statement last week, I expect the task force to look at rural maternity services as one of its first areas of focus. Members will be aware that NHS Highland instigated a review of services in Caithness in 2016, following the death of a full-term baby in Caithness general hospital. NHS Highland's review incorporated the findings from two external reviews and recommended the move

to the current model of maternity care that is operating in Caithness.

That being said, I am sympathetic to the concerns that are raised in the Liberal Democrat amendment, and the concerns that my colleagues Maree Todd and Emma Roddick have raised in—

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Neil Gray: I will need to conclude—my apologies to Mr Cole-Hamilton.

My colleagues Maree Todd and Emma Roddick have raised their own concerns about the views of women in Caithness; that is why the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health met local campaigners in the summer. I am happy to confirm that I will ask the task force to review specifically the issues in Caithness and in other rural communities, including Stranraer, and that is why the Government will support the amendment from Willie Rennie today.

We recognise that we must maintain focus on timely and continuous improvement to ensure that mothers and their babies can receive the best possible care. That is why, in Scotland, we have chosen to act now, rather than wait on a lengthy review process.

I turn back to my amendment. Healthcare Improvement Scotland took the decision to commence inspections of maternity services in Scotland following recommendations from the neonatal mortality review. That decision was fully supported by the Government. Following the NHS Tayside and NHS Lothian inspections, three further inspections have now taken place, and the reports will be published in due course.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland has confirmed that it will complete its inspection programme of the remaining 10 obstetric maternity units from April 2026. Once all 18 acute obstetric maternity inspections are complete, HIS will carry out a thematic assessment and analysis and publish an overview report. That will support national learning and build on our continuous improvement over the coming months.

The programme of independent, unannounced inspections is working exactly as it was intended. The inspections have identified where improvements are needed and are holding services and boards to account. The inspections are intelligence led and identify issues on the ground to drive improvements in real time. Healthcare Improvement Scotland works with each board to address the requirements and recommendations, providing improvement support and robust follow-up findings. That process might include engagement with the board, the offer of coaching and mentoring, and support with quality

improvement tools and resources. Approximately 18 weeks after the publication of the inspection report, the board is expected to submit a progress report to HIS and, at that point, HIS will determine whether any further follow-up action is required—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You need to conclude.

Neil Gray: Healthcare Improvement Scotland will also use the themes that emerge from the findings in its inspections to identify and implement national improvements. Furthermore, we have commissioned HIS to develop national standards for maternity care. The standards are currently open for a public consultation, which closes on Friday. Those standards will be published early in 2026.

As I draw my remarks to a conclusion, I note the comments last week from Jaki Lambert, the director of the RCM in Scotland, in response to the BBC's "Disclosure" programme. She said:

"Many of the solutions are there in the recommendations of the Ministerial Nursing and Midwifery Taskforce".

I assure members that the programme for implementing those recommendations is under way. There is a huge amount to do to implement the full range of actions for improvement, and for the full value of the changes to be taken account of throughout the process.

It is right that, as I have outlined today and last week, I assure the Parliament that the Government and I are committed to driving forward improvements across maternity services. I am keen to work collaboratively with colleagues across the chamber to do just that to bring about the improvements that are needed, and I remain open and willing to listen to the views of members on what more can be done.

I move amendment S6M-19512.3, to leave out from " , and calls" to end and insert:

" ; agrees that a national investigation into the design and delivery of maternity services should take place if Scotland's new Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce recommends it, and that it should give full consideration to staff and patient welfare; notes that the taskforce will review the findings of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's inspections into all maternity units in Scotland; recognises that no neonatal unit in Scotland is closing, and notes that the new model of neonatal intensive care in Scotland was recommended by the Best Start 2017 report, following robust clinical evidence on the safest and best possible model for the sickest babies."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: As I have alerted members, we have exhausted all our time and gone beyond the time that we had available. I am conscious of the business that we have scheduled for later this afternoon and this evening. Therefore, although I have been able to give the cabinet secretary some time back for the many interventions that he has taken, it will be difficult to

sustain that through the remainder of the debate unless we are to run seriously over time, which I am keen to avoid if at all possible.

15:25

Sandesh Gulhane (Glasgow) (Con): The debate focuses on one of the most sensitive and vital areas of healthcare: the safety of giving birth and the wellbeing of mothers and babies. The recent inspection report and the harrowing BBC exposé of maternity services are deeply troubling. They show staff shortages, exhausted clinicians and mothers who do not feel safe or heard. From the reactions that we are seeing, it is clear that, across the chamber, we all agree that the current situation is unacceptable. For any Government, that should be a wake-up call. The trouble is that the SNP Government is asleep at the wheel—and has been for years.

We fully agree that there must be a national investigation into the design and delivery of maternity services and neonatal services. The Royal College of Midwives has called for urgent action after the recent BBC investigation laid bare serious failings. Those are not isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a system that is under pressure and a tired Government that has lost control and run out of ideas. When clinicians sound the alarm, the Government must listen. Instead, the SNP Administration ploughs on with controversial plans to downgrade maternity hospitals against the clear wishes of local communities and staff.

Across Scotland, families and campaigners are rightly concerned. In Wishaw, an award-winning neonatal unit faces being downgraded. In Dundee, more than 17,000 people have signed a petition to save the neonatal unit at Ninewells. In Kirkcaldy and Ayrshire, staff and parents share the same fears that vital local services will be stripped away. Centralisation on that scale forces families in rural areas to travel hundreds of miles at the most frightening time in their lives. It separates mothers from newborns and tears parents away from their support networks. That is not progress; it is the abdication of responsibility.

We are told that the change is based on strong clinical advice, but I fear that the centralisation is being driven by workforce failure, not clinical excellence. The SNP Government cannot staff its existing services, which is why units are being downgraded. It is not because clinicians want it but because they are being forced to accept it. Let us be honest: SNP workforce planning is abysmal. We train talented midwives in Scotland, only for many of them to be unable to find jobs. Some are crossing the border to work in England because posts are not available. Morale among staff is at breaking point and now, instead of fixing the

workforce crisis, ministers are redesigning services around their failure to recruit and retain. That is not reform; it is retreat and it is surrender.

That is why the Scottish Conservatives are calling on the Government to pause all downgrades of maternity and neonatal services until a full, independent task force has reported and its recommendations are known to the Parliament. No irreversible decisions should be made until we understand the consequences for safety, workforce and access, because once a local neonatal unit loses its intensive care status, it almost never comes back.

Centralisation may look tidy on a ministerial briefing paper, but it is mothers, babies and exhausted NHS staff who will live with the consequences. Even the SNP's former health secretary, Jeane Freeman, has now admitted that the current crisis in the Scottish NHS is the result of failures of successive SNP Governments—including her own. She said that politicians focus on what needs to be done to

“remain in power, as opposed to what needs to be done to fix”

the NHS. Those words are not ours—they are hers.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): The “The Best Start” report on which the plans for neonatal services across the country are based was clinician led and was prepared in consultation with and is supported by the charity Bliss. Does he recognise that that is an endorsement?

Sandesh Gulhane: Wow. We do not have enough staff under the current resources, we have a toxic culture, and we have had a terrible report and a BBC exposé. That is the why clinicians have been forced to accept the plans. If we had enough staff, I do not think that that would be the case.

Jeane Freeman's words confirm what clinicians have been saying for years, which is that the Scottish Government's short-term political approach has left our health service without the long-term strategy that it desperately needs.

That neglect is not confined to maternity care. Across Scotland, one in six people is now on a waiting list. General practitioner access has worsened year after year, following the SNP's failure to deliver on promises made in the GP contract. Staff are leaving faster than they can be replaced. The Government boasts about record budgets, yet services are being cut, centralised or rationed. The public see through it. They see a Government that cannot match its rhetoric with results.

The Scottish Conservatives believe that every woman should have a choice—a choice to give

birth where she feels safest, whether that is at home, in a community midwife unit or in a properly supported local hospital. We believe in care that is personal, safe and as close to home as possible. We believe in listening to the professionals—the midwives, neonatal nurses and obstetricians—whose experience should shape services rather than be overridden by civil servants and political spin.

That means fixing workforce planning, ensuring that every graduate we train has a post in Scotland and supporting staff with the training and flexibility that they need; it means valuing local hospitals, not undermining them; and it means designing services for patients and not promoting election stunts such as the GP walk-in centres—that initiative was proved to be a stunt by the fact that the First Minister, in writing, and the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, in the earlier question session, were unable to answer basic questions about the walk-in centres. The cabinet secretary says that work is taking place on that, so why not give us the basic information? Such stunts are not real solutions to the serious problems that we face.

This debate is not about ideology; it is about humanity. It is about mothers who deserve reassurance, not risk. It is about clinicians who want to deliver safe care but are stretched beyond their limits. It is about the babies whose first moment should not be defined by postcode or political mismanagement.

The Labour motion before us is sensible and proportionate. It calls for an investigation that really should already have been under way. Tonight, we will support it. Our amendment is also sensible and proportionate, not least because of the dire nature of the report by the BBC's "Disclosure" programme.

Neil Gray: Will the member take an intervention?

Sandesh Gulhane: I wish that I could, but I have no time left.

The amendments give Parliament time to pause and think. If the Government does not heed our advice, the cabinet secretary will be responsible for any future risk to mothers and babies.

I move amendment S6M-19512.2, to insert at end:

“; recognises that a comprehensive NHS workforce plan is required for doctors, nurses and midwives to address staffing shortages, and that women in rural areas in particular are facing difficult journeys to access maternity services; urges the Scottish Government to swiftly make improvements to maternity services across Scotland and ensure that the recommendations and requirements issued by Healthcare Improvement Scotland following maternity service inspections are fully implemented, and calls on the Scottish Government to pause its plans to downgrade

neonatal intensive care units until the national investigation has concluded and the Scottish Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce has reported on it.”

15:32

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): It is important to begin by recognising that the vast majority of births in Scottish hospitals are managed successfully, and that the mothers and children leave those hospitals safely. We should also thank the thousands of staff who work on those units across the country, because they do a spectacular job in really difficult circumstances.

What we are talking about today is what we do when things go wrong—and things have gone wrong on far too many occasions.

Olivia was stillborn in Ninewells hospital, just over five years ago. Twenty-four hours later, Jacqui, her mother, was gone as well. Members will have witnessed the testimony of her husband, Lori, who is in the gallery today. He uncharacteristically broke down in that documentary. It was quite a rare breakdown for him, because he is an astonishing champion. He is somebody who has fought almost every single day since then to get answers not just for him and his family, who are also here today, but for families across the country, and for the good staff who work in hospitals, who deserve support. He has been determined to get answers ever since that day, in May 2020. He showed that determination in our meeting with the cabinet secretary today, and I think that the cabinet secretary will agree that he did not hold back. He was very straight about the fact that we want a national investigation into the reasons for the number of failings that have been identified.

The case involving Jacqui concerned a drug overdose that was administered, which we believe led to an amniotic fluid embolism. There is a debate about that, but there are wider issues that are really significant. In the event that we held earlier today with other families, it was quite clear that themes were developing involving different health boards in various parts of the country.

The duty of candour is at the centre of this. I know that Stephen Kerr has done a lot of work in that area. In this particular case, there was no adequate recording of the overdose, yet there was no penalty at the end of the process for that failure. We have a situation in which people are perhaps incentivised not to declare because of the fear of admitting that they have got something wrong, but, equally, there are no consequences for their failure to record.

Sandesh Gulhane: Does Mr Rennie agree that, when, as I have been told, we have multiple instances of only two midwives being on when

there should be seven, they simply do not have the time to do the job that they really want to do?

Willie Rennie: I think that that is true. NHS Lothian has a complement of about 450 midwives, so if 70 midwives had to be brought in, that shows a massive shortfall in the number of staff. Sandesh Gulhane is right, but we should not let the issues of resources and staff hide the fact that there are some issues of culture at the centre of this, which we need to dig into. Even if we had the fullest complement of staff, we might still have issues with the culture of candour, recording and the consequences of failing to record. In Jacqui's case, that failure of candour led to the failure to allow her agency over her own life and decisions.

The second point that a national investigation, which I think should happen, should consider is the failure to follow standards and guidelines—in this case, because they were considered too long to read. Why on earth would that ever be a barrier? If they are too long to read, we should have guidelines that are succinct and to the point and which can be applied.

The other more difficult point—this is difficult for us, because we are talking about NHS staff, who we admire greatly—is about the cover that some professionals provide for other professionals in times of stress and investigation. I sometimes worry that it is felt that the greater good requires that that individual remains in their post but, when there is an investigation, we must have a situation in which everybody is open and the NHS professionals do not feel that they need to cover for one other. I do not know how often that happens—

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): *[Made a request to intervene.]*

Willie Rennie: I am sorry, but I am short for time.

I do not know how often that happens, but if it happened in the number of cases that I have heard about, it is far too often.

The number of stillbirths in Scotland has dropped quite significantly, but it has plateaued in the past few years. We have not made further progress on the reduction, and we do not have a target like there is in England. We should be aiming to have a target.

My final point to the cabinet secretary is that I can understand the pragmatic way in which he is going about this. He believes that the task force is the best way to proceed, but I think that the issues are bigger. We need somebody with authority from outside the system—crudely—to rattle the cage and to make the necessary changes. I do not think that a task force with representatives from inside

the current system will be enough to address all the issues that I have highlighted this afternoon.

The one thing that is for sure is that, for the families who are in the gallery today, we must do everything that we can to make changes so that we reduce the possibility of this ever happening again.

I move amendment S6M-19512.1, to insert at end:

“; notes that, following the downgrading of the consultant-led maternity unit at Caithness General Hospital in 2016, women in Caithness can face a 100 mile trip down the A9 to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness to give birth, and calls on the Scottish Government to commission an independent review of maternity services in Caithness.”

15:38

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Every member who has spoken so far has talked about the profound impact on individuals and families who have been failed by the system, and I think that we can all recognise the seriousness of that. I acknowledge Willie Rennie's comments at the start of his speech about the recognition that we owe to the incredibly dedicated and hard-working staff, who are doing their best. We must also provide reassurance, which Willie Rennie also spoke about, that, in the large majority of cases, services are safe and are being provided to a standard that people can have confidence in. We all have a responsibility not to exacerbate fears but to respond legitimately to failings when they have happened.

Because these issues are so profound, they go beyond party politics. I welcome Jackie Baillie's motion and the tone with which she presented it. She did not give in to the temptation to make repeated comments about “this SNP Government” or such a thing as “SNP workforce planning”—I am not sure what that even means.

Sandesh Gulhane: Will the member take an intervention, so that I can explain?

Patrick Harvie: I will make some progress. The motion was presented in a way that reflected that the issue goes beyond party politics and that it should do.

What we have seen and been informed about over the recent period goes beyond what was in just one documentary. Some of the issues that we have heard about in recent weeks go back years. A whistleblower investigation in 2024, which informed the recent BBC documentary, talked about mothers and newborn babies coming to harm because of staff shortages and a toxic culture at Edinburgh's maternity unit. The whistleblowing report found that patient safety was being compromised by a series of factors,

including staff shortages, which led to delays. It said:

“There is no dispute that there have been safety concerns, near misses and actual adverse outcomes for women and babies.”

It talked about a toxic working environment as well.

Before then, a survey of RCM members across Scotland had exposed the scale of the challenges that professionals face every day. There are too few staff, a poor skills mix, inadequate equipment, substandard environments and no time to learn and develop. In 2023, the RCM’s “state of maternity services” report detailed how rising intervention rates, increasing complexity and growing policy and regulatory demands required a larger, more skilled workforce.

Many of these issues go back a significant time and are not news to those who have been working in the system for a long time, but the recent inspection reports have highlighted continued issues with staff shortages, inconsistent training and inequality between regions. All of that leads us to the question that is posed by the Labour motion: does the situation require a national investigation in addition to the steps that were announced last week?

I welcome the steps that were announced by the cabinet secretary last week in relation to the Scottish maternity and neonatal task force. We should recognise the importance of the clinical advice and expertise that will be brought into that, as well as the escalation of the support and intervention framework in NHS Lothian. Those must be seen as first steps.

The question is whether a national investigation needs to proceed alongside that task force, be part of its work or be framed by it. I was interested in the point that Stephen Kerr made when he talked about the emphasis of an investigation into culture. Both investigations would be legitimate, but that is different from an

“investigation into the design and delivery of maternity and neonatal services”,

which is suggested in the Labour motion. Different but equally valid issues are being raised.

The cabinet secretary said—I think that I am quoting him correctly—that he would be “more than happy” for a national investigation to take place if its scope and nature were determined and informed by experts.

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

Patrick Harvie: I think that I have time for one intervention.

Sue Webber: Lothian MSPs—including your colleague Lorna Slater—received a briefing in September that spoke of training on culture that was provided to NHS Lothian staff in May 2025. However, in June, when the HIS inspection took place, we heard that nothing had changed. How can we, as elected members, have any confidence that we are not being taken for fools by some of these people?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Always speak through the chair.

Patrick Harvie: I spoke briefly about the Lothian situation, but I have now moved on to discussing the call for a national investigation.

What I need to hear from the Scottish Government—and what it needs to be clear about when it asks the chamber to vote for its amendment—is its intention in framing a national investigation. Yes, there is a legitimate question about its scope—whether it covers maternity services as well as neonatal services or whether it focuses on maternity services—but there are also questions about how the clinical advice that is being sought by Government informs the decision about how a national investigation would take place. Fundamentally, that is what I want to hear about from the Government, including from the minister, who will chair the task force. In chairing that task force and taking forward that discussion, will her role be to define how that national investigation takes place, or will she be asking whether it should take place?

I need to hear, in the Government’s closing speech, a very clear steer that it will be asking how the national investigation will take place, not whether it will take place.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate.

15:45

Davy Russell (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab): As we learned from the recent BBC “Disclosure” documentary, maternity and neonatal services in Scotland are lacking sufficient resources to meet the needs of families. I often hear from constituents that, once they are in the care of the NHS, they are blown away by the professionalism, dedication and passion that staff show. However, “Disclosure” highlighted cases in which women could not access the special care that they needed, whether it was women having to give birth in a four-person ward room or the utterly heartbreaking stories of women and babies dying partly because nursing and midwifery staff are not present in sufficient numbers, especially at night and at weekends. I will not be the first person to tell the Scottish Government that, like time and tide, babies wait

for no man and do not appear just during working hours.

All of that leads to the planned downgrade of Wishaw general hospital's award-winning neonatal unit, as part of the reorganisation of nine specialist neonatal and maternity units, which will be replaced by three specialist units in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow. I am not belittling the need for a specialist neonatal unit in Aberdeen, as there is a need for something in the north-east and in the Highlands and Islands, but recent data showed that Wishaw's neonatal unit had the third-highest number of neonatal admissions, ahead of Aberdeen, and the second-highest cumulative number of days that babies spent on a respirator.

Neil Gray: I want to provide reassurance to David Russell's constituents, my constituents and other members' constituents across the country that the design of the services has been recommended under clinical advice. That advice has been absolutely clear. Those involved were supported by Bliss, which is a UK-wide recognised charity for such matters. It is critically important that we are clear that this measure is about saving the lives of the sickest of babies and those who require the greatest intervention. That is why we are going through this process.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I can give you back the time for the intervention, Mr Russell.

Davy Russell: Given that the recommendation in the "Best Start" report calls for between three and five units, it is a disgrace that the Scottish Government has chosen this way forward and opted for three. It could have included Wishaw, to serve the families in the south-west, along with Ninewells hospital in Dundee, which would have served Fife and Perthshire, with a review after a period in order to evaluate the situation. That would have been a commonsense approach rather than the severe approach of downgrading from nine units to three. That irresponsible and cavalier approach is gambling with babies' lives.

The other problem is the metric that is used to determine where and how many specialist neonatal units are needed, which is to count the number of babies born before 27 weeks. Most babies born prior to 27 weeks come from emergencies and it is often unsafe to move a mum and baby, so they need to remain in whatever hospital they are already at. That can skew the results towards city centres, and it ignores the difficulty in moving fragile newborns and will result in more of what we have seen in "Disclosure".

It is shocking that the Scottish Government chose to go with three units instead of a minimum of five, which would have at least kept things within the recommendations of the report.

We must consider as inevitable the underresourcing of specialist neonatal units, because underresourcing has happened everywhere else in NHS Scotland. It is also inevitable that my constituents and many others will need to be transferred to Aberdeen, because that is where the spare capacity will be. That is a journey of 150 miles and at least three hours for mum and baby, and it is a 300-mile round trip for other family members. Despite the fact that 80 per cent of the population live in or adjacent to the central belt, the meagre ration of £8.50 per person per day for food and travel is not going to cut it. Neither is the contribution towards reasonable accommodation for a stay of weeks within the vicinity of the neonatal intensive care unit.

Meghan Gallacher (Central Scotland) (Con): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Russell, I advise you that you will need to wind up fairly soon. I suggest that you do not have time to take an intervention.

Davy Russell: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

The SNP Government is asking parents to cover the costs above the level that I mentioned.

An online petition against the closure of the Wishaw specialist neonatal unit—for everyone's benefit—currently has more than 26,000 signatures. On behalf of those people, I ask the Scottish Government to re-examine and fully review its ill-judged and dangerous decision.

15:51

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): I remind members of my entry in the register of members' interests: I hold a bank nurse contract with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

I am sure that many of us were deeply moved by the experiences that were shared on the recent BBC "Disclosure" programme on maternity and neonatal services. The families who have chosen to share their stories in recent weeks have shown an almost unimaginable courage and resilience. The loss of a baby or child is a pain beyond any of our worst fears.

When the health secretary made a statement to the Parliament last week, after the publication of the report into acute maternity services at the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh and the airing of the "Disclosure" documentary, he shared his family's experience and his deep personal gratitude to the maternity staff for their care. I know that that gratitude will be shared by many in the chamber. The subject is incredibly emotive and sensitive and will have deeply personal resonance for most

members, whether in relation to themselves, their family or loved ones.

Before my election to the Parliament, I specialised for around 15 years in perinatal mental health, so I am only too aware that, although the period around a birth can be one of the most exciting times in a family's life, it can sometimes be the most challenging—all the more so when events do not go to plan. When that happens, our hard-working maternity care midwives, nurses, support staff, doctors and clinicians do an incredible job in offering families compassionate and supportive care.

In my 30-plus years of clinical practice, there has been significant progress in many areas, including reducing infant mortality. Neonatal deaths and stillbirths reached their lowest level in 2024. In September, NHS Lanarkshire, which provides care to many of my constituents, won the *Health Service Journal* award for maternity and midwifery services initiative of the year, for its innovation, expertise and unwavering commitment to patient safety. That followed the launch of its holistic antenatal care pathway to provide women with optimal care and evidence-based interventions to reverse an increasing rate of stillbirth that the board had noted during the pandemic.

Monica Lennon: I am grateful for the opportunity to listen to Clare Haughey's expertise.

I think that the Wishaw NICU is award winning because of the excellent care by the staff and their close bond with families who have to keep going back there for on-going care.

Does she recognise that that is why the planned changes are so frightening for families, including those who have put the lives of their babies in the hands of that hospital and would not have their babies without it? Does she understand why the calls to pause the review are growing louder and louder, and that we need to do what we can to save that unit?

Clare Haughey: I will come on to that point at the end of my speech.

Any death or injury in maternity and neonatal services is one too many, is an absolute tragedy and must be followed by a period of reflection and learning.

The SNP Scottish Government is committed to learning from every case, in order to improve care, strengthen safety and support families. That is why the HIS inspection reports are being undertaken and will be reviewed by Scotland's new maternity and neonatal task force. As the health secretary acknowledged last week, some of the reports might make difficult reading for health boards and the Government, which has agreed

that a national investigation into service design and delivery should take place if the task force recommends it.

Around 56,000 Scots have the word "Rutherglen" on their birth certificates. From 1979 to 1998, Rutherglen maternity hospital operated as a stand-alone maternity hospital on Stonelaw Road in my constituency. Many people in Rutherglen, Cambuslang, Halfway, Blantyre and East Kilbride have fond memories of welcoming a new addition to their families in Rutherglen maternity. I worked there during my nurse training, and my oldest son was born in the hospital. The care that mothers and babies received there is still viewed with fondness and high regard by many, who held genuinely and sincerely strong feelings about the news of its closure.

Unfortunately, things did not always go according to plan. Over the years, I have heard of occasions when an emergent issue, such as a cardiovascular or neurological incident, meant that a patient had to be rushed to another hospital in Glasgow to access more specialist care, sometimes just in time to save their life. The decision to eventually close Rutherglen maternity, which was instigated under a Tory Administration and completed under a Labour Administration, ultimately hinged on its stand-alone status.

The clinical experts' view at the time was that, when there were difficulties or complications, acute hospital services and a full range of further specialist support should be available on site. It was the health board's view that, when highly complex and specialist neonatal surgery or complex neonatal paediatric care were required, there were clear safety benefits to co-location with main centres of excellence.

I fully appreciate that it is a highly emotive topic for many families today, just as it was 27 years ago. However, it is extremely disappointing that the same points against that very clear and direct argument have recently been rehashed by some Opposition politicians, and that misinformation has circulated in the media about Scotland's current neonatal service model.

As the health secretary made crystal clear to the Parliament last week, no neonatal units are closing and, where care is being consolidated, it is for the very smallest and sickest babies—in three specialist units—so that those babies have the absolute best chance of survival.

The new model of neonatal intensive care was recommended by the "Best Start" report in 2017, following robust clinical evidence—which the Government would be heavily criticised for not following—on what the safest and best possible model for the sickest babies should be. Together, we must reaffirm our shared and utmost priority—

that the safety and wellbeing of mothers and babies is paramount.

15:58

Meghan Gallacher (Central Scotland) (Con): Every mother deserves to give birth feeling safe, supported and close to home. Willie Rennie made a pertinent point in his opening remarks, which is that we are talking about situations when things go wrong, and not about the vast majority of births, which are successful and go well, with mother, baby and family going home safely. However, that is the problem, because too many women in Scotland face the opposite of that—long journeys, understaffed wards, unit downgrades and a system that is stretched beyond limits.

The state of Scotland's maternity and neonatal services is the result not of a sudden crisis or an increase in the number of births but of years of managed decline. Despite clear evidence, repeated warnings, localised campaigns and countless assurances from ministers, the Scottish Government has failed to address the serious inequalities and safety issues that new parents face in urban and rural settings.

The time for excuses has long passed. The best start plan set out an ambition to redesign maternity and neonatal services across Scotland. Its aim was to reduce separation of mothers and babies, provide care closer to home and support parental presence and involvement in neonatal care. Every single MSP in the chamber can get behind the principles of those goals, but, despite those good intentions, there have been significant failings in their delivery.

A survey that was published by Bliss Scotland found that, for every 10 babies who need overnight neonatal care, only one room is available for a parent to stay in with their newborn. That leaves parents with an impossible choice between finding accommodation close to the hospital, or leaving their baby overnight in the hospital because there is no option for them to stay with their child. That clearly contradicts the promise that is set out in the best start model, which states that parents and carers of those babies must—that is the important word—be supported to provide care alongside neonatal staff.

Last week, I raised that exact issue in the chamber, following the damning findings of the recent inspection of Edinburgh royal infirmary's maternity unit, which many colleagues have mentioned this afternoon. I appreciate that the cabinet secretary has confirmed that he will write to me on the issue, and I welcome that approach. However, I hope that the letter that I receive will provide a detailed explanation of how the Scottish Government will make urgent changes to ensure

that beds are available for parents who want to stay with their vulnerable and sick babies. If babies are in the neonatal department, their parents will want to be nearby, and they need that support. I will not accept anything less from the Scottish Government. We should all be able to support that.

It is not just about overnight accommodation. As we have heard, across NHS Highland, more than 150 pregnant women have had to endure 210-mile round trips because consultant-led maternity services have been downgraded. We have just heard from Clare Haughey that, apparently, MSPs in the chamber are saying that departments are closing. They are not closing; they are being downgraded. That is not spreading misinformation; it is a clear fact. That is the case not just for MSPs who represent rural areas but for MSPs in urban settings.

Clare Haughey: I have to correct Meghan Gallacher on that point. It has been said that the unit is closing—that misinformation has been spread. I accept that she might not have said that, but that has been reported.

Meghan Gallacher: Nobody has said that in the chamber this afternoon. I hope that MSPs understand that, if they say that things are closing when that is not the case, that will continue to spread misinformation, fear and alarm among our communities. That is not acceptable, and we should not tolerate it.

From MSPs who represent rural areas, we have heard harrowing stories of mothers giving birth at the side of the road and of mothers experiencing complications while trying to reach services in Inverness. Why should rural mums have to take on additional risks while in labour? Why has the Government failed to provide maternity services closer to home?

Downgrading has been the Government's overall strategy. The decision to downgrade the neonatal intensive care unit at University hospital Wishaw is one of the most alarming examples of the Government's failure to listen to families and local communities. The unit is nationally recognised and, as we have heard, is an award-winning centre that has saved the lives of some of the sickest and most premature babies in my region. Ministers insist that the decision is about saving lives, not saving money, but those are empty words that mean nothing to parents in my region, who face the prospect of their babies being moved to another neonatal department in the future. They will continue to campaign to stop the downgrade, and I will continue to back them every step of the way.

The best start plan promised that parents would not be separated from their babies, but, if a baby

is moved from Lanarkshire to Aberdeen because of this downgrading exercise, that is exactly what will happen. The Government cannot continue to centralise care at the expense of communities. It needs to pause the plan, listen to families and staff who know the service best and commit to retaining Wishaw's neonatal unit as a full intensive care facility. The minister also needs to explain how the Government intends to set up a new task force for maternity and neonatal departments while it continues with the removal and downgrading of services. It just does not make sense.

Every baby born in Scotland deserves the best start, and every parent deserves to be by their newborn's side. The minister and the cabinet secretary have a tough job today in defending the indefensible, but we need to remember that the problem is of their creation. The centralisation of maternity and neonatal services must be paused, and an urgent national investigation must be agreed to. This is about outcomes. The Government cannot continue to fail mothers and babies, who deserve our support.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): I remind members that back-bench speeches can be up to six minutes. There is no time in hand, and any interventions must be absorbed within the members' agreed allocated speaking time.

16:04

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I pay tribute to the families who have come forward to share their experience—it has been heartbreaking to hear it, and I know how hard it must have been, but without their interventions and bravery, we would not have some of the information that has come to light. It is important that we all understand that.

I had prepared a different speech from the one that I will give. I want to mention a couple of points that members have mentioned in the chamber, and to pay tribute.

Pam Duncan-Glancy raised the plight of disabled mothers. In my time in the Scottish Parliament, I have also seen information coming through about discrimination against black and minority ethnic women, who had higher mortality rates than those in other parts of the community. I believe that that is now well understood and has been tackled. The culture in maternity across the world has been changed by some of the research that has been done on those issues.

Scotland is a safe place for most births, although that does not take away at all from anyone's bad experience. We are broadly in line with the birth mortality rates in the rest of the UK and among our European neighbours, some of

which, such as France and Poland, have higher rates. By and large, we are not an outlier in terms of the statistics. However, those are statistics, and this is about individual cases—we cannot forget that. Every failure is one that will deeply hurt a family, a community and the clinicians who have been dealing with that baby and the family. In that regard, I take a moment to thank the staff at the unit in Wishaw, who do an incredible job and have been award winning.

However, I also have concern for my constituents. Wishaw is, of course, in my constituency, but the unit services the whole of NHS Lanarkshire. About 500 babies are born there each year—40 to 50 a month. The estimated number of babies who would have to be moved to the new alignment of specialist units would be two or three a month. For the majority of my constituents, and, indeed, for the majority of constituents in all parts of NHS Lanarkshire, their babies will still go to the neonatal unit in Wishaw, which is not closing, and they will still be served by the exceptional clinicians there.

Monica Lennon: Clare Adamson mentioned the numbers, which sound small when they are on a spreadsheet or in an email to MSPs. The reality is that there is no capacity in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Families are going to Aberdeen. In Lanarkshire, we have high levels of poverty and inequality, and we are going to separate families at a hugely vulnerable time. The numbers might be few and might sound small, but if we add them up, we can see that a lot of lives will be turned upside down. Surely that is worth fighting for.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Lennon—this is not an opportunity for a speech.

Clare Adamson: I say to Monica Lennon that we have to look at the clinicians' analysis of the situation. Research worldwide shows that the best care for very small, very prem babies is done by people who do the job almost day in, day out. That builds their expertise and the expertise of the teams. That will happen at Glasgow. Despite being award winning, Wishaw does not do neonatal surgery. Neonatal surgery for my constituents at the moment will be done in Edinburgh or Glasgow, or in whichever hospital is in a position to do that surgery across Scotland. When that very specialist care is needed, that is where the baby should go.

I admit that perhaps more could be done with the third sector, with charities and with the Government to look at supporting families in that situation, but the vast majority of people will not need that.

People have asked, "Who's saying it is closing?", and they have said that, in fact, no one is saying that. However, at the Citizen

Participation and Public Petitions Committee in September this year, Ms Baillie said three times on the record that the neonatal unit is closing.

Ms Baillie said:

“the Wishaw neonatal unit was the best neonatal unit in the country—not Scotland, but the whole of the United Kingdom”.

We know that. She then said:

“For some reason, the Scottish Government then decided that it should close.”

That is an incorrect statement.

Jackie Baillie: Will the member take an intervention?

Clare Adamson: I ask Ms Baillie to let me finish.

She said:

“Lanarkshire, the third largest health board, which covers a population of 655,000 people, would have its neonatal unit removed.”

That is an incorrect statement. She then said:

“It has been said that when the Wishaw neonatal unit closes and mums and babies cannot go to there, to Glasgow or, potentially, to Edinburgh, Aberdeen could be the default.”

Thankfully, the committee’s convener corrected that language, reminding members that we should not

“cause additional alarm to people”,

noting that

“the core aspect of the ... petition is about sustaining the specialist units.”—[*Official Report, Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee*, 8 October 2025; c 18, 20.]

Finlay Carson: Will Clare Adamson give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Adamson has 12 seconds left.

Clare Adamson: It was not about the closure of those units. Can we please, as politicians, examine the issues, have a task force—

Jackie Baillie: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Baillie, Ms Adamson will be concluding now.

Clare Adamson: We should not be causing fear and alarm when that is not required.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that we are extremely tight for time.

16:11

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): Centralisation of maternity services has forced mothers to travel long distances, often in

dangerous conditions, to reach consultant-led units. We have heard harrowing stories. One woman gave birth at the side of the A96, instead of at Dr Gray’s hospital in Elgin, after being forced to transfer to Aberdeen because the unit was closed. How can that be a safe alternative? I am glad that, after much campaigning, maternity services have been reinstated at Dr Gray’s hospital. Sadly, that is not the case elsewhere.

In Caithness, the consultant-led maternity unit was downgraded in 2016, due to a tragic incident when there was no paediatric support available. There is an excellent midwife-led unit in Caithness, but it is 100 miles away from obstetricians and paediatricians, so the risk of a lengthy transfer has to be factored into decision making. The roads are poor, and they can be absolutely treacherous in winter. Therefore, the vast majority of Caithness births take place in Inverness.

Women are being forced to plan to be induced, with all the attendant risks of more acute labour pain and complications. Giving birth in a delivery unit, hours from home and away from family and friends, is now the norm, sadly, in large parts of rural Scotland.

Finlay Carson: I want to put on record, for Clare Adamson’s benefit, that the maternity service in Stranraer—the birthing suite, which used to be one of the 10 busiest such services in Scotland—is closed, as a result of a lack of midwives, and women in Wigtownshire are expected to make a 140-mile round trip. That is a fact.

Rhoda Grant: That is the case in many parts of Scotland.

Even when planning takes place, things do not always work out. Jackie Baillie highlighted the case of the twins who were born in separate hospitals, in different counties, during a transfer from Caithness to Raigmore. Were it not for the quick-thinking ambulance staff, who took an incubator with them when they left Caithness, the outcome could have been very different. Halfway through the journey, when the birth of the first twin was imminent, they stopped at the community hospital in Golspie. There are no maternity services there. The first twin was born with the assistance of hospital and community staff, who rallied to the cause. The first twin was then separated from their mother and travelled in the incubator in a second ambulance to Inverness, where the second twin was subsequently born. The trauma of that is unthinkable, yet NHS Highland has not risk assessed that journey, despite being asked about that on numerous occasions.

On another occasion, a woman was turned away at the door of Raigmore hospital after travelling for more than two hours in labour, and she then had to travel on to Aberdeen and Dundee. Being turned away is very common, because women who are not close to giving birth are not admitted to the Inverness maternity unit, due to the lack of space. Instead, they are asked to wait somewhere else—to walk around the retail park while they are having contractions.

Many have been asked to travel many hours back home and return again when they are closer to delivery. Those women live in Caithness, Wester Ross, West Sutherland, Skye and Lochaber—many miles from Raigmore hospital. Surely, driving long distances on poor roads, with someone beside you having contractions, cannot possibly be safe. To travel three hours from Skye, only to be told, late at night, to go home and return in the morning, is inhumane. However, there is not space in the Inverness maternity unit to cater for those who cannot go home. Whistleblowers have said that staffing and accommodation are inadequate, which puts intolerable strain on the staff who work there, yet the Scottish Government has put on hold the capital spending to upgrade the unit, and there is no prospect of that work being carried out.

Recently, I met a young mum who went to Inverness to be induced. She could not get into the maternity unit but was eventually given accommodation. Her partner was also given accommodation, but it was in a totally different building. She had already been induced and was in pain; she was in a strange place, on her own, with no one to turn to. When, eventually, she was taken into the maternity unit and gave birth, she was told that her baby was unwell and needed special care services. There was no space in the unit in Inverness, and she was told that he would have to be flown to another hospital. She was asked whether she wanted her husband to stay with her or to go with their newborn baby. What kind of choice was that? It was made worse, because many hours later, worrying about what was happening, she discovered that her parents were waiting outside the hospital to be with her—and that her husband and baby were in the Inverness special care baby unit, because a bed had become available.

It does not need to be like that. We need to make sure that midwife-led community units are safe. For low-risk births, they are, but when something goes wrong, there must be a plan B.

James Bingham told the Caithness Health Action Team:

“The geographical distance and transfer times between Caithness and Raigmore is greater than that accepted to be safe for a primary birthing unit.”

We need a plan B. There is a plan B in Orkney, which allows babies to be born there, but there is no plan B for Caithness. Should we be using the Scottish specialist transport and retrieval service to provide that?

Presiding Officer, I finish with—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please conclude—you are over your time, Ms Grant.

Rhoda Grant: I finish with a quote from a mother in Raigmore, who said:

“Women don’t feel safe any more. It’s barbaric. We don’t matter up here. That’s what it feels like.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Grant.

I remind members yet again that they agreed to make speeches of up to six minutes and to the timings for the debate, which the Parliament has approved.

16:17

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): To start, I, too, pay tribute to the families who have come forward so bravely and who have informed this debate.

At the heart of today’s discussion lies an issue of the deepest importance: the safety, dignity and wellbeing of mothers, babies and families across our country. I acknowledge the concerns that have been raised following recent inspection reports into maternity services. Those reports highlight serious issues in some areas and, as we have heard, the Scottish Government takes the findings extremely seriously. Where any failings have been identified, immediate action has been demanded—and rightly so.

Safe, effective care depends on well-supported staff. That is why this Government has made record investments in our NHS, including funding specifically to increase the number of midwives across the country. The Government has also established a new maternity and neonatal oversight group to provide strategic leadership and accountability for those vital services. The group will ensure that every NHS board is supported and, where necessary, challenged to deliver the safest and most consistent standards of care.

Scotland benefits from a strong, independent inspection regime through Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The Scottish Government has commissioned HIS to develop new national maternity standards, which will be published early next year. Those standards will strengthen consistency and quality across Scotland, ensuring that, regardless of where they live, every woman and baby can expect to have the same high level of safe, person-centred care.

Some of my colleagues have already commented on the recent HIS report on NHS Lothian. The Government is deeply concerned by that report. I take this opportunity to raise concerns for expectant mothers in Lanarkshire that my constituents have brought to me. Like other Lanarkshire MSPs—those who have spoken today have mentioned it—I, too, have had meetings and contact with constituents and hospital staff in relation to the situation at Wishaw neonatal unit. That has included meetings with the minister. It is safe to say that people are generally not happy with the decision. That can be seen from the number of people who have signed the petition.

Opposition parties place a certain narrative on this issue, and the Government another. We have heard that play out today, so I will not go into it again. The Parliament has a responsibility to people. Although Opposition members have a duty to be responsible for what they say about the realignment of services in Lanarkshire and the safety of children, I also believe that the Government needs to be open to working with local communities and be willing to change its mind.

People in Lanarkshire feel that there is a downgrade. I know that the decision is clinically led—and the cabinet secretary made that point—but I do not think that we can tell people how they should feel or that their experiences and views are wrong. I am sure that no one has that intention, but it is what a lot of people believe has happened. It is incumbent on the Government to respond compassionately.

Jackie Baillie: Will the member take an intervention?

Fulton MacGregor: I am not going to have time—apologies.

There needs to be more middle ground on the issue, with the Government and Opposition parties moving into positions where more agreement can be found. The issue is far too big for party politics. It is big for my constituents. I will leave my comments on that issue there.

I also want to raise the case of a constituent who I mentioned during the cabinet secretary's statement last week. She contacted me about her experience of being pregnant, which culminated in a traumatic experience during childbirth and an exhausting fight to be heard. I should also say, for clarity, that the baby is now doing well. I have written to the cabinet secretary on that, and I know that a response is imminent, but I must put my constituent's case on the record again, as it is imperative that all mothers feel that they are an integral part of their care and in decision-making

processes when they are pregnant and giving birth.

Even one case like my constituent's is one too many, but it is important to acknowledge the significant progress that has been made in Scotland during the past two decades. Rates of stillbirth, infant mortality and neonatal deaths have fallen markedly. Those improvements are the result of sustained investment, innovation and collaboration between clinicians, midwives and the Government.

I should also say, as I did last week in the chamber, that my family has had three fantastic experiences at Wishaw general's maternity ward during the births of our three children. Each time, we have found the staff responsive, helpful and utterly professional. As Willie Rennie said, although we know that that experience is very much the norm, sometimes it is our job as MSPs to represent constituents who do not experience the norm. It is important that everyone gets the same service, and that when they do not—as in the case of my constituent—lessons are learned.

I hope that I have time to raise an issue involving another constituent who does so much for families across Lanarkshire and Scotland: Julie Morrison from the fabulous Baby Lost Retreat, who wrote to me this week asking for clarification on what regulation or oversight is currently in place for private clinics offering non-NHS pregnancy scans. I put that to the Government, and I thank the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health for her response, which clarified that independent clinics where services are provided by a doctor, dentist, nurse, midwife or dental technician have to register with HIS, and that any clinics that are registered with HIS are inspected to ensure that they meet the rigorous standards that are expected of their NHS counterparts. I therefore urge anyone who might be considering opting for a scan outwith the NHS, for any reason, to select a provider that is regulated by HIS.

It will not surprise the Deputy Presiding Officer to hear that I had other things to say, but I am not going to have time, so I will conclude by saying that, although we recognise the progress that we have made, the dedication of our NHS staff and the decisive action that is already under way to make services even safer, we must also acknowledge the challenges that have been highlighted in recent reports and in the testimonies that have been shared today and ensure that constituents who come to us with concerns feel validated and heard and, most important, that lessons are learned and that our services continue to be among the best and safest in the world.

16:24

Sue Webber (Lothian) (Con): It is a fact that there are huge inequalities when it comes to women's health. Today, we are considering the failings of one critical element in women's health—the state of our maternity services in Scotland. The failings in our maternity services have not happened overnight. They are a symptom of years of mismanagement, neglect and lack of investment.

The NHS in Scotland has been under SNP management for circa 20 years, and it is a grim fact that maternity services continue to fail women and families across Scotland. Like many others, I believe that its plans to cut the number of neonatal intensive care units are dangerous. Women in rural areas are already forced to travel long distances to give birth, thanks to the downgrading of local maternity units across Scotland. Journeys that I have made on numerous occasions in my life before coming to Parliament—from Raigmore hospital to Caithness general hospital, or from Dr Gray's hospital to Aberdeen royal infirmary—are challenging to drive at the best of times, never mind when an expectant father is driving his pregnant partner, with all the pressure that that entails, yet the SNP plans to cut the number of neonatal intensive care units from eight to three. Why three and not five? That would force families to travel to Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen in order to seek treatment for the most pre-term and most sick babies.

Neil Gray: Sue Webber asked why three and not five units. That is because that was the direct recommendation of "The Best Start", which recommended moving to three units within five years.

Sue Webber: It was "three to five", as in a dash—not the number two, but the letters T and O. You had the choice of three, four or five.

Ninewells hospital in Dundee, Princess royal maternity hospital in Glasgow, Wishaw general hospital in Wishaw, Victoria hospital in Kirkcaldy and Crosshouse hospital in Kilmarnock have all been downgraded under these plans. At least 22,100 people across Scotland have signed a petition to the Scottish Parliament protesting the plans, but the SNP does not listen.

I could continue to list SNP failures across the country, but I want to focus on NHS Lothian in my region. It has been well over a year since an employee at the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh blew the whistle about conditions in the maternity unit there, and nearly a year since the subsequent investigation revealed staff shortages and a toxic management culture. In August 2024, new mother Louise Williamson spoke out about her horrific labour, when she was repeatedly ignored. In

December, NHS Lothian said that action had been taken.

The report that was uncovered by the BBC last December upheld, or partially upheld, 17 concerns about safety, and NHS Lothian claimed that work was under way to improve patient safety and the working environment and culture. On 20 June this year, I was among a group of MSPs and MPs who were told in a health authority briefing that the culture was being fixed. However, three days later, there was an unannounced inspection at the unit by HIS, which revealed how much work was still needed.

The depth of the problems that were revealed in the BBC investigation last year—mums and newborn babies coming to harm because of the poor culture and staffing situation in the unit—was such that an instantaneous reversal was improbable. However, the reality is that it has taken an unannounced inspection to confirm that nothing has changed. After many reassurances that the issues were in hand and would improve, I was shocked by the damning inspection into maternity services at the royal infirmary. We now know from the publication of the HIS report last week that it is still in the grip of a crisis. That does not fully explain the "Everything is in hand" message that I was given in June, nor does it give me any faith that the assurances that were given in the wake of the revelations can be trusted.

HIS's unannounced inspection of the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh revealed a culture of mistrust and staffing shortages that led to delays in the induction of labour process of up to 29 hours. The inspectors also found frustration with staffing levels, which presented a safety risk. Staff were overwhelmed, unsupported and not listened to. There was a reluctance to submit incident reports, and staff described a culture of mistrust.

Following the HIS inspections report last week, I asked the Scottish Government about public confidence in NHS Lothian and delivering the needed changes, because women deserve to know that their maternity services are safe, but NHS Lothian told MSPs last week that those issues would take time to resolve. Do we have time for that?

Professor Hiscox said that 72 additional midwives will be working by the end of the year, with 30 in position to meet basic legal requirements. That is a staggering admission of previous failures, and it exposes how much inequality there is in women's health provision, because it is hard to imagine any other service being allowed to deteriorate in that way. It should never have got to the situation where undercover investigations and inspections were needed.

The health secretary, Mr Gray, has rightly put NHS Lothian's maternity services into special measures, and I thank him for that critical intervention. However, what confidence can we offer our constituents that they will see real, tangible changes and improvements in safety?

The BBC's "Disclosure" programme was a heart-wrenching watch. One woman described how she was made to feel like a nuisance by the staff in her west coast maternity unit. Our maternity services must put families first and provide compassionate and empathetic care and support. They must have safe staffing levels, with staff being valued and given every opportunity to deliver the best care. After all, as I know, having worked in healthcare for nearly 30 years before I was in my current role, that is why midwives enter the profession.

16:30

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I am speaking today on an issue that touches the very heart of family life and the values that we hold dear: the safety and quality of maternity services in Scotland. Like Clare Adamson, I have altered my speech notes extensively since the debate began.

The Healthcare Improvement Scotland inspection report into maternity services at the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh has—rightly—prompted serious reflection and urgent action. I, too, begin by acknowledging the experiences of families who bravely shared their stories, and I extend my deepest condolences to them all. Their courage in speaking out will help to drive the improvements that we all want to see.

The HIS report identified 26 areas requiring improvement, including delays of up to 29 hours for induction of labour, staffing shortages, a suboptimal skill mix and gaps in incident reporting. Inspectors also highlighted cultural issues such as staff feeling overwhelmed, unsupported and reluctant to escalate concerns. Those findings are concerning and cannot be ignored.

However, it is important to stress that those challenges, although serious, do not mean that our maternity services are unsafe overall; Scotland's hospitals remain among the safest places to give birth. The health secretary made that clear in his ministerial statement last week, when he said that the commitment to continuous improvement is unwavering.

The Scottish Government has acted decisively. Following the HIS report, NHS Lothian's maternity services have been escalated to level 3 of the NHS Scotland support and intervention framework, ensuring enhanced scrutiny and immediate support. That is not a token gesture—

the framework is a robust mechanism that brings additional leadership, resources and accountability to drive rapid improvement.

A new Scottish maternity and neonatal task force has been established, chaired by the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health. The task force will include voices from service users, front-line staff, independent bodies and third-sector organisations. Its remit is clear: to provide national oversight, share best practice and ensure that lessons are learned quickly across Scotland.

Leadership has been strengthened, with the appointment of a dedicated associate medical director for women's services, and cultural improvement initiatives are under way. Those steps demonstrate that the Government is not waiting for change—it is driving the change.

Although issues are being addressed in Lothian, I must acknowledge the concerns that have been raised in Wigtownshire and Stranraer; I know that the ministers on the front bench will expect me to represent my constituents in that respect. Since the closure of the Clenoch birthing suite at Galloway community hospital in 2018, expectant mothers have faced journeys of up to 70 miles along the A75 to Dumfries and Galloway royal infirmary.

Safety is my primary concern in all this, and choice is also a crucial part of the person-centred approach. I remind members that I was a clinical nurse educator prior to coming to the Parliament. As a perioperative nurse, part of my educational role was to teach midwives and junior doctors how to provide safe care during caesarean sections, including urgent and crash C-sections.

Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Emma Harper: I will, if the member is really quick, because time is tight.

Carol Mochan: I thank Emma Harper, who knows that I always value her professional background. One focus of the task force is on leadership and mentoring and how investment needs to go into that. Would she support that?

Emma Harper: I would absolutely support developing leaders and mentors in everything. My 30 years as a nurse was spent mentoring, guiding and teaching people in trauma surgery and trauma-type situations, which are very stressful.

Following the 70-mile journey to Dumfries, some women were told that they had shown up too early and were sent home again. As an MSP, I have called on NHS Dumfries and Galloway to provide holding accommodation while labour progresses, but I cannot see that that is happening at all. I do not think that we should be sending people home

when they are in the early stages of labour if their home is 72 miles away.

Women have been having babies in lay-bys and in ambulances because they could not reach the hospital in time. As I said, safety and choice are my primary concerns. Women have described their experience as frightening, exhausting and traumatising, with some even reconsidering pregnancy because of the lack of local birthing provision.

I know that a wide range of perinatal services are provided in Stranraer, but birthing is not taking place there. An independent review recommended having a midwife-led birthing service for low-risk births in Stranraer. Last year 1,054 babies were born in Dumfries and Galloway, and 20 per cent of those births were considered low risk, which means that last year 210 births in Dumfries and Galloway were low risk. Obviously, there are challenges in our rural areas.

I am appealing to the minister in this: I support any progress to help to improve perinatal care and to provide confidence to expectant mums and their families in the west of the south-west region. I know that the Scottish Government has been working on maternity safety for years. The best start five-year plan sets out a vision for maternity and neonatal care that focuses on continuity, safety and family-centred support. More recently, the Government introduced new clinical guidance, a miscarriage framework and an action plan to tackle racialised health inequalities in maternity care, which others have mentioned. Those initiatives reflect a proactive, systemic approach, rather than a reactive one.

It is not just about fixing problems; it is about building a culture of trust, learning and continuous improvement. We owe that to the families who have shared their stories, the staff who care for us and every child who is born in Scotland.

16:36

Michael Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):

My constituents in Dundee and the surrounding areas are deeply concerned by the proposal to downgrade the neonatal ICU at Ninewells hospital, which is what the SNP Government is trying to do. I wrote to the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health about the issue, and I am afraid that the response was an exercise in hiding behind pedantry and semantics when the Government should be levelling with the public. It is a downgrade, and the Government should be fully honest about that. Babies who are born before they are 28 weeks old will not be cared for in Dundee. The idea that the vital service will continue in my community is simply untrue. If the plans go ahead, there will no longer be a neonatal

intensive care unit at Ninewells. The facility would be downgraded to a local neonatal unit and the most premature and sickest babies would be treated in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Those are the facts.

In recent weeks, there has been an outpouring of stories locally, with many of my constituents sharing how the Ninewells neonatal ICU cared for their baby and their family at the most difficult moments of their lives. My constituent Zoe's son, Archie, was born at 27 weeks and four days, and spent months in Ninewells. She says:

"Without the specialist neonatal care he received, my son would not be here today."

On the prospect of downgrading Ninewells neonatal ICU, Zoe said:

"It will break families. It will cost lives. It will deepen inequality, especially for those who cannot afford travel or accommodation to be near their baby. Cutting NICU services is not a 'restructuring'. It is a direct threat to vulnerable babies and their families."

Zoe is among the 22,108 people who have signed a petition against the downgrading; so is another constituent, Nicola, who paid tribute to the skilled and dedicated team at Ninewells by saying:

"They picked me up and put me back together again to be a good mum for Leo ... They are on top of their game in intensive care for neonates. We don't want to lose that level of care, skills or staff."

She went on to say:

"Travelling to another city in an ambulance (if there is one available) for what could be weeks and months in parent accommodation (if there are any rooms) is isolating and expensive. It would be a great shame to put families through this when facilities and trained staff are already in place in Dundee."

I genuinely fear for the pipeline of future staff—the next generation of nurses and doctors who are training in Dundee, who will miss out on key elements of the training on the most acute emergency cases. Our partnership between the University of Dundee and Ninewells hospital has delivered exemplary training to thousands of doctors and nurses in our city for decades, but without a key element of their training being available in the city of Dundee, can we have confidence that we will deliver the future scale of specialism and expertise that our country needs? Perhaps the minister could address some of those issues in her closing remarks.

The SNP Government says that the issue affects only a small number of babies. However, do those babies—kids like Archie and Leo—matter? Do the families in Dundee not deserve the same access to care that Zoe and Nicola received?

Ministers say that women can be transferred in advance to neonatal ICUs in Aberdeen, Edinburgh

and Glasgow, but they must know that premature births can happen at any time and often occur unexpectedly. A pregnant woman in Dundee would be many miles from the neonatal ICU in another city when she went into labour.

The downgrading of Ninewells neonatal ICU is also part of a trend of maternity services being downgraded and closed in the region. In Angus, there was the loss of the Montrose community midwifery unit in 2016 and, before that, the scrapping of the plan for a replacement Montrose unit for north Angus in 2013. This Government's pursuit of ever more centralised services is, frankly, dangerous for mothers and babies.

All of that comes on the heels of the deeply concerning inspection report into maternity services at Ninewells that I raised with the First Minister in the chamber on 15 May this year. The report contained worrying details of delays to triage, variation in how women were assessed and delays to the induction of labour of up to 72 hours. It also revealed that staff were unsure of the location of the emergency medication for birthing and the process for accessing it; that equipment was missing leads, meaning that only three of five fetal heartbeat monitors were in full working order; and that hard-working staff were under pressure due to their workload and high levels of sick leave.

It is vital that we rebuild public confidence in the service, so Labour's call for a national investigation into maternity and neonatal services across Scotland could not be more important. The Government should not hide behind its task force. It is abundantly clear that real change is needed, and it must grip that challenge today.

The director for Scotland of the Royal College of Midwives has stated:

"The RCM has been raising the exact same concerns that the inspections have found with the Scottish Government, and with individual Health Boards, for years. We have urged this Cabinet Secretary and his predecessors to get ahead of the curve and implement the changes we know ... need to happen."

This knackered SNP Government always seems to be behind the curve. It has broken our national health service and put mothers' and babies' lives at risk. We need the report that has been called for, and we need to make sure that there is an investigation—it needs to happen now.

16:42

Karen Adam (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): I want to start by acknowledging everyone who has been let down by our maternity or neonatal services. Those families have suffered greatly, and every death or injury is an absolute tragedy. That any concern that is raised is not acted upon is simply not good enough. People

who live with such experiences deserve to be heard, believed and shown what is changing because they made the effort to speak up.

The Scottish Government has been clear that it will ensure that it learns from every case in order to improve care and strengthen patient safety. I am glad to hear that, but parents and families need to feel that and see it in action, not just hear it in words spoken in the chamber today.

I come to this debate with a little bit of my own experience. I have had six babies, and I was lucky enough to be at the birth of my first grandchild. I have seen the difference that good care makes, but I have also seen poor care—I have seen poor practice that leaves a lasting mark. I understand the difference that it makes when people are listened to, when plans are explained and when people are treated as partners in decisions. That should be the baseline everywhere and every time.

In recent weeks, following the difficult coverage that we have seen, families have contacted us. They want straight answers, but they also want visible action. We should be honest about where culture has fallen short, and we should also be clear about the work that is already under way. Independent, unannounced inspections by Healthcare Improvement Scotland are finding issues on the ground, but they are also driving immediate improvements.

That is scrutiny doing exactly what it should. However, it builds trust only if boards act quickly and report openly so that families can see that change. National standards for maternity care have been commissioned to make expectations clear for everyone, and ministers have said that inspection findings will be acted on decisively. Delivering clear standards, honest inspection and rapid local action—that is how we build confidence.

Feeling safe is not only about what happens when something goes wrong but about the care that people receive every day. I am glad that the Scottish patient safety programme's perinatal improvement programme and the best start supporting boards are there to improve day-to-day practice by achieving better handovers, clearer communication and stronger teamwork, particularly in emergencies. That is how care becomes more personal and more reliable, and not just the subject of a postcode lottery.

Continuity matters, too. Women should have a named midwife and a small team that they see regularly, without being passed from pillar to post, because experiencing such an approach lowers stress and improves outcomes. I have believed that for many years, and—perhaps I should declare an interest here—when I was expecting

my fifth child I signed a petition in favour of such an approach, because I knew how important continuity was through my lived experience. I still believe that now. Let us make continuity real for the women who need it the most—in particular, for those who have high-risk pregnancies, as I did—and then build it across the service so that it is the norm and not an exception.

When something goes wrong, families should get a plain-language explanation and be able to see what has changed as a result. Staff should be supported to speak up and be heard, and boards must act immediately when concerns are identified. Families should be able to see that action and not have to chase it.

We should also keep sight of progress. Over the past two decades, Scotland has reduced infant mortality, neonatal deaths and stillbirths, through the support achieved by having more midwives and consultants. That does matter, but progress never represents a finish line—it creates a responsibility to keep moving. When inspection flags risks, action must be quick and visible. When the culture falls short, leadership must step in. When families ask for clarity, they should not be met with jargon. When improvement is working, we should scale it and sustain it. A new early pregnancy, maternity and neonatal oversight group will keep an eye on delivery of those aims, but what matters most is that families feel the difference when such care is given.

Birth trauma needs plain speaking. If someone was ever dismissed, not believed or left without answers, that should matter. People should not be regarded as making a fuss if they still feel an aftershock months or even years after their experience. Services must be trauma informed and include postnatal debriefs that answer questions, easy routes into perinatal mental health support and care that recognises how poverty, disability, rurality and language can compound risk and fear. Equity should not be simply part of a slogan—it must be a part of safety.

We must keep the focus on what happens to women in the room, in that moment. It is important to listen early, act quickly and be clear, to provide real continuity and to keep instructions sharp and updates plain so that families can see progress without having to fight for it. That would set us up in those early days for achieving a society that is truly founded on wellbeing.

I will finish simply: this is about creating trust and providing care that people can rely on. If we hold to those basics, we will not just talk about having safer, kinder and more consistent care but deliver it—excuse the pun—for every family in Scotland, as we absolutely should.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to closing speeches. I call Alex Cole-Hamilton to close the debate on behalf of the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

16:48

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I am very grateful to the Labour Party for giving its time to this important debate this afternoon. I rise in support of the amendment in the name of Willie Rennie. It speaks to one of the most geographically punishing health inequalities in the British Isles.

The maternity services at Caithness general hospital were downgraded in 2016—the year that I, and many others, entered the Parliament for the first time. That decision has forced pregnant mums, who are sometimes in active labour, down the arduous and treacherous stretch of the A9—the 100 miles that it takes them to get to Raigmore—sometimes through the snow or the dark, and sometimes dealing with deer on the road and attendant concerns about vehicular crashes. Every day, from that day to this day, my party has stood with community campaigners—in particular, the Caithness Health Action Team—in support of restoring those services.

That decision to downgrade denies expectant mums fast access to obstetric expertise and care in the event of rare or serious issues. It demands arduous travel and delay, heightening risk and stress on what is perhaps the most vulnerable day in that person's life. It is a situation that has commanded the attention of the United Nations, which regards the situation as an abject failure of the right to health for mums in rural parts of the country.

That denial of human rights is measured in near misses and negative health outcomes. We have heard from Jackie Baillie and Rhoda Grant about the split-site twins who were born at either end of the northernmost leg of the A9. There was also a newborn who suffered brain damage in October 2022 as a direct result of the three-hour journey that it took to get the mum to Raigmore. That is a concrete example of an adverse neonatal outcome if ever there was one.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Con): What the Liberal Democrats have put in their amendment is extremely valuable, which is why the Conservatives support it. Is there also a need to look at Scotland's neonatal transport service? It has three bases across the country, but the one that covers the north, including Caithness, might have its response team situated in Shetland or Tayside when it is needed in Moray or Caithness.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: We need to consider provision for expectant mums in the round, so I welcome Douglas Ross's intervention.

There is also the case of Shelley Mowat, who in 2018 developed a potentially life-threatening blood clot as a result of the protracted journey that she faced to get to Raigmore. In her remarks, Jackie Baillie was right to touch on the many mums who, when they have completed that arduous journey, are turned away at the doors of Raigmore because of staffing and capacity pressures at the hospital. That sometimes increases their journey time to up to 12 hours, which comes with excessive waits and complications.

All that Willie Rennie's amendment asks for is that mums in the far north be offered the same consideration that was offered to those in Moray who, following an independent review of the kind that we are calling for, have now seen their access to a full spectrum of maternity services begin to return at Dr Gray's hospital.

Today, we are witnessing a welcome departure from the refusal and denial that traditionally come from SNP ministers. I welcome that. It has been a long time coming—nearly a decade. By agreeing to our amendment—as I am so glad that the cabinet secretary has signalled the Government will do—he will hand a victory not to the Scottish Liberal Democrats but to the campaigners, the patients, the mums and the midwives in the far north who have been crying out for an independent review for many years. I hope that, as the Government concludes the debate tonight, it will give us some detail on that review. It is clear that the Parliament will, by a majority, vote for our amendment. By so doing, it will instruct and commission an independent review into maternity services in the far north.

I have never accepted that this issue presents a binary equation of either leaving mums unsafe in the far north or forcing them to come to Raigmore. There have been many examples of effective models that work in other remote and rural parts of the country, such as in Orkney or other parts of the Highlands and Islands.

In agreeing to the amendment, the Parliament will have a responsibility to hold the Government's feet to the fire. If we agree—as it seems we will do—to commission that independent review, that cannot be the last that we hear of it. The Government must, in short order, explain to the Parliament when the review will be commissioned, when it expects it to report, and how and by what means the campaigners and the communities of the far north can feed into it. It should be the case that only those with lived experience can feed into it—the lived experience of the mums who, right now, might be travelling that treacherous 100-mile journey that takes more than two hours to cover,

as they do battle with sightseers on the north coast 500 on the most important day of their lives. We should not expect them to face such a journey, which they sometimes do alone.

I am grateful to the Government for supporting our amendment. It is a victory for the campaigners in the far north. It has been a long time coming—it has been far too long coming.

16:54

Patrick Harvie: In closing for my party, I begin where I started with my opening speech and recognise the tone that many members have struck in taking part in this debate. Jackie Baillie might forgive me if I say that, on another day and on another topic, she is capable of party political point scoring as much as anybody is, but she clearly recognised that that was not the way to take forward today's debate. A number of members have taken that approach. In fact, both Jackie Baillie and Neil Gray recognised the profound human impact on families who have been failed and our shared responsibility to them.

As well as reflecting on issues in the inspection reports, the BBC documentary and their own case loads, members across the chamber have spoken up on behalf of people they have met, as well as reflecting on their personal experience and offering views on the overall provision of service in different parts of the country.

It is important and legitimate to reflect the fact that members can disagree in good faith on some of the delivery questions about the nature and design of services, and that they have a responsibility to speak up for their constituents, but a debate such as this one should not be about assigning blame. It should be about seeking to restore trust with those families and NHS staff who feel that they have been failed.

A number of members spoke with professional expertise, as well as with deep compassion and personal experience. There are too many to mention, but I pick out Clare Haughey's speech, which brought together those different elements. It is significant that we have someone chairing the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee who is able to do that.

That kind of content and contribution should have characterised the whole debate. Those listening will have heard serious, thoughtful and informed debate, but they will also have heard a fair amount of political accusation and counter-accusation. I do not imagine that that is what they wanted to hear when they started listening.

Staff, patients, inspection reports and documentaries have all brought to us the severe challenges that are felt throughout the system, as

well as the many cases in which there have been unacceptable failings and the human impact on people in those situations. Our job—that of the Parliament and the Government—is to decide what to do about it.

I have heard a very clear demand from across the chamber for a national investigation. I have not heard any reason to reject that on principle. I see a case for allowing clinical expertise to shape that national investigation and to define its scope and timing. I am willing to allow the Government to go through that process if it can give us an assurance. The minister will be chairing the task force, so it is not simply a question of waiting for the task force to form a view. She will have a view in shaping the approach of the task force in the way that she leads it.

I would like to hear from the minister in her closing speech a clear sense from the Government that it intends to use its leadership of the task force to ensure that the question of a national investigation, which is sought by members across the chamber, involves what the investigation will be and how it will be carried out, and not whether it will take place. I did not hear that confirmation in the opening speeches; I hope to hear it in the minister's closing speech.

Presiding Officer, I will return the remainder of my time to you.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): Thank you, Mr Harvie.

16:58

Stephen Kerr (Central Scotland) (Con): I hate to disagree so openly with Patrick Harvie, but this is a Parliament and there is such a thing as political accountability. The situations that we are discussing lead on inexorably from political decisions and priorities. For us to ignore that and somehow seek to deconstruct the issue and hide behind fake unanimity in the chamber about where culpability lies would not be honest of many of us.

At the end of the day, I appeal to Patrick Harvie on the issue of the national investigation. We cannot divorce culture from any operation, whether we are talking about the design and delivery of maternity services or any other subject. When it comes to the execution and delivery of anything, culture is at the very heart of whether it succeeds. So much of what we have said in the debate this afternoon comes down to an issue of culture and what impact that has on the way that services are being delivered.

Patrick Harvie: It sounds as though Stephen Kerr thinks that I have just argued against a national investigation. I have argued very clearly in favour of one and I want the Government to say

that it is in favour of one as well. That is the commitment that I want to hear, and I will hold the Government to account as much as anybody else in the chamber if it makes that commitment.

Stephen Kerr: I respect what Patrick Harvie has just said.

Jackie Baillie: Will Stephen Kerr take a brief intervention?

Stephen Kerr: I will—a brief one.

Jackie Baillie: Will Stephen Kerr acknowledge that the Government's amendment uses the word "if" and does not say that an investigation will take place?

Stephen Kerr: It is now impossible for the minister to change the wording of the Government amendment. I therefore appeal to Patrick Harvie to join others in the chamber who, rightly, are going to demand a national investigation into maternity services in Scotland. I hope that he will consider the importance of that to so many people, including people who are present in the public gallery.

I thank everyone who has spoken in the debate, but I will specifically mention something that Willie Rennie said. Rightly, he mentioned a duty of candour. On a related matter, I wrote to the First Minister yesterday about the Public Office (Accountability) Bill—the Hillsborough law—which will enshrine the duty of candour in law. I am asking the Scottish Government to lodge a legislative consent motion so that all the provisions of that bill will apply to Scotland, including the right to legal representation and legal aid for families who are impacted by service failure.

I think that we all know why that bill is called the Hillsborough law. It was introduced in the House of Commons in September. It seeks to establish a statutory duty of candour and it is also about guaranteed parity of arms when it comes to legal representation, as I have said. It has real implications for everything that we are talking about here and now. It is about not just a legal change but a culture change in our public services that affirms truth telling, transparency and responsibility, with an expectation on those who hold public office to adhere to the Nolan principles not just as a concept but in practice.

Willie Rennie mentioned how important it is that someone from outside the system is involved in the national investigation. Some of the things that we have been talking about today are, by definition, systemic. To understand the system, a person sometimes has to step well outside it. Someone who does not, if I may coin a phrase, have a dog in the fight has to look at the matter fairly and squarely without prejudice or bias. I hope that, when we get the national

investigation—given that I hope that we will vote for it this evening—its leadership will have an “outside the system” element.

On Michael Marra’s comment about Ninewells hospital, let us not lose sight of the fact that, after HIS did its initial investigation and published its report, it went back to Ninewells and discovered that not much had been done—not much progress had been made. That is the issue that demands a national investigation. That is why we have to talk about the culture as a whole and it is why, this evening, the Parliament must instruct the Government to get on with the delivery of that national investigation.

Nothing goes to the heart of our conscience as parliamentarians—or even as Scots, if I may put it as broadly as that—more than the safety of mothers and babies. What we have heard today and what we have read in recent weeks and months—the reports and documentation that have accompanied the work that has been done in Edinburgh and at Ninewells—is indefensible. In Edinburgh—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Kerr, please bring your remarks to a close. You are over your time.

Stephen Kerr: Let me conclude by saying again that I urge everyone, as parliamentarians with a duty to their constituents, to support the motion as it will be amended. Let us act and not posture. Let us make things better. Let us not hide behind the inconvenient myths that we sometimes tell ourselves.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Kerr.

Stephen Kerr: Let the safety of women and babies in Scotland be something—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Kerr.

Stephen Kerr: —that does not wait another day.

17:05

The Minister for Public Health and Women’s Health (Jenni Minto): I, too, thank Jackie Baillie for bringing the debate to the chamber, and I am hugely grateful for the thoughtful and heartfelt contributions from members across the chamber. This subject goes above party politics.

Please allow me to echo the cabinet secretary’s opening remarks. I do not underestimate how difficult today’s debate will have been for the families in attendance who have been affected by the issues. I thank them, too, for so powerfully sharing their experiences in the “Disclosure” documentary in order to enable change. I extend

my deepest condolences to you personally and to anyone affected by those issues.

There is no doubt that we all agree that delivering safe, high-quality maternity care for all mothers, babies and families in Scotland must be a priority.

Paul Sweeney (Glasgow) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Jenni Minto: I want to make some progress.

I reiterate the assurance that we gave to women and families last week that maternity and neonatal services are safe. As others have noted, the vast majority of the women and their families have very good experiences of their maternity care and have high praise for the caring, compassionate and professional staff and those who look after them.

Over the past two years, I have had the privilege of visiting maternity and neonatal services across Scotland, from some of our largest units to our smallest, and of meeting the staff, service users and service leaders. I have seen at first hand the tremendous work that is delivered by our maternity and neonatal service staff. However, there is room for improvement—there always will be.

Our approach to maternity and neonatal services is firmly grounded in evidence. Together with the other UK nations, we commissioned the national maternity and neonatal audit programmes and the MBRRACE-UK—mothers and babies: reducing risk through audits and confidential enquiries across the UK—confidential inquiries, which have given us rich data about our services and have allowed us to benchmark.

Willie Rennie: The minister rightly paid tribute to those who are in the public gallery today, but they have made it pretty clear that they want a national investigation. In an interesting contribution, Patrick Harvie said that, although he is prepared to accept the process, he thinks that it should be a matter of when, rather than if, we have a national investigation. Will the minister agree to a national investigation now?

Jenni Minto: We have to be clear that the reports that we rely on illustrate the growing complexities around birth and the changing demographics across the UK, which means that it is more important than ever to ensure that all the women receive care and support that is tailored to their changing needs and that our services adapt and evolve to meet them.

I want to say a little more about the Scottish maternity—

Sandesh Gulhane: Will the member take an intervention?

Jenni Minto: I would like to continue.

I want to say a little more about the Scottish maternity and neonatal task force, which I will chair. As the cabinet secretary identified last week, it will provide strategic national leadership and will include senior figures from across our health system and independent bodies, as well as third sector and advocacy organisations. I have also made it clear that I want the voices of women and families—as well as those of front-line midwives, nurses and doctors—and their experiences of maternity services to be heard by the task force. Their voices will be at the heart of the group.

I thank Patrick Harvie for his speech. He was correct in suggesting that the work that is being progressed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland in its inspections and by the task force are first steps. I also agree with Stephen Kerr that culture is at the centre of how any organisation operates.

Mr Harvie asked specifically how the Government will ensure that a national review is not only about the design and delivery of services but also about the wider issues that have been raised. I listened carefully to his points about important issues such as culture, staffing and the need to ensure that the scoping of what is part of a national review is designed by experts. I can confirm to him and others on the record that, as chair of the new task force, I will seek to define—from the task force—how an investigation can take place.

My view is that the findings of the HIS inspections of all maternity units must form part of the task force's consideration. For example, we know that the inspections will bring to light similar emerging themes across Scotland, so it would be right for the task force to consider what should be the specific focus of a national investigation. Mr Harvie and others have my assurance that I will take that work forward, and I will be happy to update the Parliament on the specific work of the task force as it progresses.

As the cabinet secretary's amendment makes clear, no neonatal intensive care units are closing. All local neonatal units in Scotland will continue to offer neonatal intensive care for their populations.

Jackie Baillie: Will the minister take an intervention?

Jenni Minto: I have only one minute left.

The new model of neonatal intensive care was recommended by the "Best Start" report in 2017, and the impact that that will have on babies is clear, as members have said in their contributions. The 2017 report says that

"three to five neonatal intensive care units should be the immediate model for Scotland, progressing to three units within five years."

As our amendment notes, Bliss, the UK's leading charity for supporting families with premature or sick babies, has reassured families that the model in Scotland is the safest and best possible one for sick babies. It is also important to recognise that, as soon as babies are well enough, they will be repatriated to their local neonatal unit. I know that there is no place for complacency when it comes to the care of women and babies in our maternity services.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Minister, you need to bring your remarks to a close.

Jenni Minto: The Scottish Government is committed to timely and continuous improvement. We will hold boards to account to ensure that every woman, baby and family across Scotland receives the high-quality care that they deserve.

17:11

Carol Mochan (South Scotland) (Lab): I offer my deepest condolences to all those affected by what we have heard about today. I commend the families who have bravely shared their stories and have spoken out about their experiences, and I thank them for sitting with us in the public gallery today. I also thank the families who are watching the debate at home. I understand that speaking about this will not have been easy, and I offer my personal thanks to them all for telling their stories. We have heard their call for a national investigation, and I hope that the Government has, too.

Jackie Baillie and Willie Rennie have shown that this is not an either/or situation. The cabinet secretary can support our motion, so I ask the minister to come back to me, through an intervention, with an answer to this question. Is your position that there will be an investigation, or is your position, as your amendment suggests, that it is a case of "if" there is an investigation? I would be happy to take an intervention.

Jenni Minto: I have been clear in what I have said. Through the task force, we will work towards how we start to look at an investigation.

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): I remind members of the requirement to speak through the chair at all times.

Carol Mochan: I do not think that what the minister has said is clear.

I hope that Patrick Harvie has listened hard to what has been said, because we thought deeply about what to ask for. We understand what has been said about the task force, but it has not been implemented. We understand that the task force will be headed by the minister, but how can we be sure about what will happen?

Patrick Harvie: Once again, I pay tribute to Labour for lodging its motion and making the argument for a national investigation. However, in the minister's closing speech, we have heard a clear statement that this is now only a matter of framing the investigation and of how it will be taken forward, not whether it will be taken forward. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Let us hear one another.

Patrick Harvie: It would feel inappropriate if the Parliament as a whole was not willing to take yes for an answer.

Carol Mochan: I hope that Patrick Harvie will vote for our motion, which is absolutely clear about what the Parliament is looking to deliver today. Any loss or harm in maternity and neonatal services is tragic, especially when deaths could have been prevented. As others have said, such incidents are rare and the majority of the women have a safe and good experience when giving birth, but that does not diminish the experience of those who do not.

Paul Sweeney: I thank my friend for giving way. We met earlier with my constituents, the Keegan family, who lost their baby, Mason, to sepsis at just three days old. That was entirely avoidable. The significant adverse event review in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde recommended measures that needed to be implemented, but the family does not have confidence that they have been. We do not need to wait for a task force to tell us what we already know. It is the minister's job to ensure that the implementation is done. Does Carol Mochan agree that the minister should get on and do that now?

Carol Mochan: I fully agree, and Paul Sweeney will agree with me that we must have a culture of transparency, not secrecy. That comes from the top. Agreeing to our motion would show clear leadership from the top of the Scottish Government.

Sandesh Gulhane: Will the member take an intervention?

Carol Mochan: If it is short.

Sandesh Gulhane: It will be. I have the "Best Start" report in my hands, and I will quote from section 6.4 of the report, which is entitled "Proposed levels of neonatal care in Scotland":

"It is proposed that the current total number of 15 neonatal units is retained, with three to five units being re-profiled as neonatal intensive care units and the remaining 10-12 units being designated as local neonatal units or special care units."

I question why the minimum of three units was chosen rather than five. Does Carol Mochan agree that that is unacceptable? *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Let us hear one another.

Carol Mochan: I know that many members were shocked to read the findings of last week's Healthcare Improvement Scotland report, on which many contributions to today's debate concentrated. It revealed major concerns around culture, oversight of patient safety, and staff wellbeing. Staff reported feelings of frustration, burnout and being ignored. The culture of mistrust that has developed should never be allowed in our NHS. Staff should feel supported, appreciated and listened to, and they should never—ever—feel that they cannot escalate concerns. The duty of candour must be real, and the Government must show leadership in that area.

We have heard about the challenges of maternity services—in the interests of time, I will not go over them again. However, in my South Scotland patch, challenges in the Wigtownshire area are beyond what women should have to accept. The Galloway community hospital action group, some of whom are listening to the debate today, have fought a powerful campaign against the closure of the maternity unit in Stranraer. That closure means that people have to travel 70 miles to Dumfries, and I have heard from a constituent that the road was flooded and therefore closed today. That causes extra strain and stress to mothers and families in the area. The Patient Safety Commissioner for Scotland met the group only a couple of months ago and felt that there was a gap in the service. That is not what 21st century midwifery care should look like.

The Scottish Government has failed to provide adequate oversight for the decision in Wigtownshire. It must look at how it interacts with the integration joint board, and it must listen to the community. Much of what has happened there is due to the Scottish Government's inability to workforce plan effectively, which has left mothers and babies in Stranraer without a maternity unit.

Before I close today's debate, I will take a moment to reflect on some of the calls from the Royal College of Midwives. In response to the Healthcare Improvement Scotland report, the RCM warned that

"staff shortages, rising workloads, and a lack of specialist and educator roles in maternity services are placing unsustainable pressure on staff and risking the long-term quality of care."

As other members, including my colleague Michael Marra, have said, the RCM has been urging the Scottish Government to make changes—it has been raising the issue with the Government for years. Systemic challenges are letting down women, their families and the maternity staff. Many midwives feel that they are at breaking point, and the union is strongly urging

the Government to invest in its maternity staff. The task force recommendations need to be implemented, and some investment needs to be put behind that. I urge the Scottish Government to listen to that.

Our calls today are clear. For the staff, improvements to workforce planning are desperately needed, to ensure that the maternity wards are sufficiently staffed. We need investment in leadership and in mentorship within midwifery. Many of the solutions already lie with the nursing and midwifery task force, and we support the task force. We want the solutions to be delivered, but that does not need to be done by the task force alone.

For the mothers, the babies and their families, a national investigation is required into the design and delivery of maternity and neonatal services across Scotland. It is clear that members must vote for the Scottish Labour motion tonight if we are to protect mothers, babies and families in Scotland.

Again, I offer my deepest condolences and gratitude to those who have shared their stories and experiences. Without you, change cannot happen. We want change to happen, and it is now over to the Scottish Government.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on Scotland's maternity services.

Land Reform (Scotland) Bill: Stage 3

17:20

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is stage 3 proceedings on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. In dealing with the amendments, members should have before them the bill as amended at stage 2—Scottish Parliament bill 44A—the second marshalled list and the second groupings of amendments. The division bell will sound and proceedings will be suspended for around five minutes for the first division of stage 3. The period of voting for the first division will be 30 seconds; thereafter I will allow a voting period of one minute.

Members should now refer to the marshalled list of amendments.

Section 23—Rent review: 1991 Act tenancies

Amendments 350 to 355 moved—[Douglas Lumsden]—and agreed to.

Amendment 229 moved—[Mairi Gougeon].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 229 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

As this is the first division of stage 3 today, I suspend the meeting for around five minutes to allow members to access the digital voting system.

17:24

Meeting suspended.

17:30

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: We will now proceed with the division on amendment 229.

Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I was struggling with the app. I would have cast a vote for myself and for Lorna Slater. We would both have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: We will ensure that those votes are recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)

Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)

Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 88, Against 28, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 229 agreed to.

Amendment 106 moved—[Edward Mountain].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 106 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)

MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 28, Against 87, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 106 disagreed to.

Section 24—Rent review: limited duration tenancies

Amendments 356 to 362 moved—[Douglas Lumsden]—and agreed to.

Amendment 230 moved—[Mairi Gougeon].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 230 be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

The vote is closed.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Gibson. We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowe, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 89, Against 27, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 230 agreed to.

Amendment 107 moved—[Edward Mountain].

Section 25—Rent review: repairing tenancies

Amendment 108 moved—[Edward Mountain].

Section 27A—Notice requirements: lease of 1991 Act holding

Amendment 109 moved—[Edward Mountain].

Section 27B—Landlord’s objection to legatee or acquirer on intestacy: near relatives and other persons

Amendment 110 moved—[Edward Mountain].

Section 27C—Legatee or acquirer on intestacy: supplementary provision

Amendment 111 moved—[Edward Mountain].

Section 27D—Succession to tenancy

Amendment 112 moved—[Edward Mountain].

The Presiding Officer: Does any member object to a single question being put on amendments 107 to 112?

As no member objects, the question is, that amendments 107 to 112 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor

Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 26, Against 91, Abstentions 0.

Amendments 107 to 112 disagreed to.

Section 29—Regulation-making powers

Amendments 363 and 364 moved—[Mairi Gougeon]—and agreed to.

Amendment 113 moved—[Edward Mountain].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 113 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

Paul McLennan (East Lothian) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app would not connect. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr McLennan. We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)

Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (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)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 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) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)

McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 46, Against 71, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 113 disagreed to.

Amendment 114 not moved.

After section 29

Amendment 365 moved—[Mairi Gougeon]—and agreed to.

Section 30—Commencement

Amendment 366 not moved.

Before schedule

Amendment 231 moved—[Mairi Gougeon].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 231 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My phone is not working. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Rennie. We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)

Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 90, Against 28, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 231 agreed to.

Schedule

Amendments 367 to 372 moved—[Mairi Gougeon]—and agreed to.

Amendments 373 to 376 moved—[Tim Eagle]—and agreed to.

Amendment 377 moved—[Mairi Gougeon].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 377 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]

Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowe, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 90, Against 28, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 377 agreed to.

Amendments 378 and 379 moved—[Mairi Gougeon]—and agreed to.

Amendment 380 moved—[Mairi Gougeon].

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment 380 be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 90, Against 28, Abstentions 0.

Amendment 380 agreed to.

Amendments 381 to 391 moved—[Mairi Gougeon]—and agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: That ends stage 3 consideration of amendments.

As members will be aware, I am required under standing orders to decide whether or not, in my

view, any provision of a bill relates to a protected subject matter—that is, whether it modifies the electoral system and franchise for Scottish parliamentary elections. In my view, no provision of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill relates to a protected subject matter. Therefore, the bill does not require a supermajority to be passed at stage 3.

Before we move to the debate, I call Mairi Gougeon to signify Crown consent to the bill.

Mairi Gougeon: Yes, there is Crown consent to the bill.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, cabinet secretary.

Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S6M-19421, in the name of Mairi Gougeon, on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill at stage 3. I would be grateful if members who wish to speak in the debate were to press their request-to-speak buttons.

17:47

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands (Mairi Gougeon): I am pleased to open the debate on our Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. In the broad sweep of land reform history, today marks a watershed moment. It is a moment to pause and reflect on the progress that the Parliament has made on that journey and to look forward to the substantive changes that the bill will deliver.

The Scotland that we seek is one that is rooted in the values of fairness, dignity and hope. Scotland's land must be an asset that benefits the many not the few—those words reflect the Government's desire to effect real change and to ensure that we deliver on the hopes and aspirations of our communities. At its heart, land reform is and has always been about the deeply rooted and complex relationship between Scotland's land and her people. It goes to the heart of who we are and the values that we hold dear. In the words of Norman MacCaig:

"Who possesses this landscape?—
The man who bought it or
I who am possessed by it?"

Those are not new problems and this is not a new debate; stark inequalities and injustices have persisted in rural Scotland over centuries. The bill builds on the hopes, aspirations and achievements of generations of fearless campaigners and advocates of land reform, past and present, from the distant voices of the early campaigners and the hard-won land rights of our crofters and small landholders, to the pioneers of community ownership and the tenant farmers who dared to believe that a fairer future was possible.

The measures in the bill show that change is possible and that we can build a better future, allowing communities to breathe new life and new opportunity into rural Scotland. Across four days in the chamber, we have debated and considered more than 400 amendments. I want to reflect on the changes that the bill will bring.

For the first time, ministers will have unprecedented lotting powers for large estates over 1,000 hectares. That lotting can happen prior to sale or transfer, where it is in the public interest.

For the first time, communities will receive advance notification of impending sales or transfers of land by large landowners. That will increase transparency and will also allow them time to decide whether to submit a community right-to-buy application. Too often, people and communities feel powerless when the land that they live on is sold with no prior warning. The bill will ensure that that can no longer happen.

For the first time, large landowners will be required to engage meaningfully with communities, and to publish publicly available land management plans. Landowners will be legally required to set out how they use their land and how that contributes to key public policy priorities.

I know that there are concerns about the bill and how it will work in practice. I want to assure members that there will be guidance and support for landowners and communities. As I have said throughout the process, responsible landowners will have nothing to fear.

I also know that there are those here who do not think that the bill goes far enough. Throughout the parliamentary process we have worked on a cross-party basis to try to build consensus to make the bill as effective as possible, and it is right that we take a measured and proportionate approach, given that these are new policies. I have always said that we need to ensure that the bill does not have a disproportionate impact on smaller landholdings.

We as a Government, and as a Parliament, also have a responsibility to ensure that all of our legislation is compatible with our human rights obligations. The review provisions that are now in the bill will allow further evidence on the success of the provisions to be considered and changes justified.

Our land reform provisions will cover more than 50 per cent of Scotland's land, and the powers that we have agreed in the bill will allow for future changes based on evidence.

I turn to part 2 of the bill. Tenant farmers and small landholders—like our crofters—are vital to the rich fabric of our rural communities, and this legislation builds on their hard-won rights, ensuring fairness and dignity. Our nation's tenant farmers account for around one in five of our farmers and manage close to one quarter of our agricultural land. The reforms will enable them to deliver our vision for sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con): Over the past six months, I have also been speaking to farmers and landowners, and one of the things that I have often heard is that landowners are now concerned about renting out land to tenant farmers because they fear that they

might not get that land back. Has the cabinet secretary heard that?

Mairi Gougeon: That speaks to some of the claims that we have heard throughout the debate that the bill poses a threat to the letting of land in Scotland. However, the general trends that we see do not bear that out. Ultimately, the reforms that we are introducing are about fairness for our tenant farmers and about doing what is right. That is why I am proud of the measures that we are introducing.

We are modernising rights around farming practices, improvements and diversification. Our tenants must be able to effectively manage their land and businesses and make the changes that are right for them. All that we seek to do is to make getting to that outcome an easier process for all parties.

Previous reforms that have improved tenants' rights, which were controversial at the time, have proved to be absolutely essential. The reforms that we are now making will ensure that tenants and small landholders can make a decent living and have the confidence to invest and improve their holdings, enabling them to access new support mechanisms and contribute to nature and climate outcomes.

The bill also respects the rights of landowners. Should they wish to exercise any right to resume land, they can do so. In turn, all that we seek to do through resumption reforms is ensure that tenants are compensated fairly.

However, there is a pattern to reforms in this area. Every Government since devolution that has sought to deliver improved rights and protections for our tenant farmers has come under blistering attack from powerful landed interests. In this case, that has included the false accusation that the bill introduces retrospective measures. It does not. The reforms will change the law, but they do not change the past. The changes affect the future exercise of existing rights, as many bills do.

The reality is that the approach of the reforms' critics has nothing to do with a desire to have a vibrant tenanted sector, and everything to do with a broader desire to roll back reforms and wind the clock back to a feudal past that has long been consigned to the dustbin of history. I will do what is right. The measures are designed to be balanced, proportionate and, ultimately, fair.

Finally, this is the only Government to bring forward significant modernisation for small landholders in nearly a century.

The amendments will ensure that small landholders will benefit from a modern legal framework that is fit for the 21st century. Our reforms will enable the creation of new small

landholdings, delivering a new route into agriculture for the next generation.

At its heart, land reform is about giving voice to the voiceless and empowering communities and individuals, and it is that quest for dignity and fairness that is at the heart of our bill.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill be passed.

17:55

Tim Eagle (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I remind members of my entry in the register of members' interests.

I begin by recognising the work that has gone into the bill. I have appreciated the constructive engagement from the cabinet secretary and her officials throughout the process. We have worked together on a number of areas, and I acknowledge that good will. However, the fact remains that, on the central principles of the bill, we will never see eye to eye.

There seems to be a consensus across much of the chamber that community land ownership is inherently better than private ownership and that large landowners—or medium landowners, as the bill has been amended—are somehow bad. I simply do not share that view. That is not to say that I am blind to the benefits that community ownership can bring. Across Scotland, there are powerful examples of communities taking control of local assets—from the Galson estate on Lewis, to Knoydart and Eigg—and delivering real benefits in housing, tourism, renewable energy and social cohesion. Those successes deserve recognition; however, we must be careful not to turn a success story into an ideology.

Private ownership, too, brings enormous value to rural Scotland. It brings investment, jobs and local spending. It supports the people who work our land, manage our forests and power our economy. When there is a balance of fairness and trust, landowners and communities can and do work together to create opportunity. We have seen that across Scotland, with new affordable housing built in partnership with estates, local businesses supported through shared land use, and renewable energy projects developed jointly between communities and private owners. Those partnerships do not make headlines, but they are the quiet engine of rural Scotland, delivering economic growth, employment and environmental progress.

This bill and previous land reform bills have set out priorities around access to land, so I will talk about tenancies. I agree with the Scottish

Government's ambition, as laid out in its agricultural reform programme, to see

"a thriving rural economy with more land-based jobs, stronger communities, and greater diversity of ownership."

I support that sentiment, but sentiment alone will not deliver it. The policies must support those outcomes in practice, and for many new entrants and young farmers, that means tenancies.

The stage 1 report raises concerns that deserve our attention. It says:

"Others thought the changes, overall, would make owners even more loath to offer tenancies because of an increased financial risk. The fact that the changes are not solely forward-looking but will affect aspects of existing contracts was seen as unfair."

If we want to encourage more tenancies, more access to land and more opportunity for young farmers, we must build confidence and we must make landowners feel that it is fair and secure to let land, not riskier or more bureaucratic. I do not believe that the bill does that.

The truth is stark: the area of tenanted land in Scotland has fallen dramatically over the past two decades. Twenty years ago, around 30 per cent of agricultural land was tenanted; today, it is closer to 18 per cent, and the trend continues downward. That means fewer opportunities for new entrants, less flexibility for farming businesses and a less resilient rural economy.

The Scottish Government, as a major landowner, should lead by example in supporting new farmers. Although nine starter farms were created on public land between 2012 and 2015, progress has stalled since, with the 2023 review highlighting missed opportunities and unclear plans. For instance, the Glen Prosen estate, bought in 2022 for nearly £18 million—

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): Will the member take an intervention?

Tim Eagle: I am happy to.

Jim Fairlie: Does the member not recognise that in the programme for government, it was set out that all public landholdings should look at what opportunities they can create for new entrants?

Tim Eagle: I do remember seeing that, but I do not think that it has progressed since. The minister can correct me if I am wrong, but the Scottish Government has created only nine starter farms, and there were comments about unclear plans in the 2023 review.

Glen Prosen still lacks a complete land management plan. If ministers are serious about supporting new entrants, they must demonstrate that commitment on the land that they control.

Another central issue in the bill is property rights—rights that have existed for generations and that are fundamental to how our economy functions. We have heard concerns, including from respected voices such as Don Macleod, about the potential impact of the bill's pre-notification and lotting requirements. Those could create uncertainty in land sales, add cost and delay and deter legitimate investment. That is not reform; it is bureaucracy.

There is a danger that, however well intentioned, the bill begins to resemble the kind of state control that we have seen elsewhere in Europe. Some have suggested that it echoes the French reforms of the 1960s, which created the SAFER model—a system in which the state has extensive powers over land transactions. That suggestion is probably unsurprising, given the Scottish Land Commission review in 2023.

It is true that that model reshaped rural France, where feudalism was abolished centuries earlier than in Scotland. It achieved some success in supporting young farmers and reducing speculation, but that was a long time ago and things have moved on. It also brought layers of bureaucracy and market distortion and reduced transparency. We should be careful to not repeat those mistakes. Scotland's strength lies in its diversity and its ability to combine private enterprise with public purpose.

I do not agree that the bill is transformative. People in rural Scotland want a balance: a system in which landowners can invest with confidence, tenants can build a future and communities can choose to own land, without private owners being treated with suspicion. We need a rural economy that thrives without being tangled in red tape.

Good land management is about partnership, not punishment. When farmers, estates, communities and Government work together, we can achieve remarkable things—from tree planting and peatland restoration to tourism, education and food production. That is the Scotland that I want: one where families can make a living from the land, food production is valued and the next generation has the opportunity to stay, work and thrive. Our shared purpose should be trust built on fairness, freedom and belief in the people who make rural Scotland what it is today.

18:01

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I thank the legislation team, which helped to draft amendments, and all the parliamentary staff who have assisted with the bill and those who have worked late to allow the late sessions to happen. I also thank those who gave evidence and helped with our deliberations. A special thanks must go to

Dr Josh Doble and Community Land Scotland for their help.

That said, it is disappointing that the next Parliament will have to return to the issue of land reform. The review of the community right to buy took place at the same time as this bill was passing through the Parliament. That review should have been part of the bill.

We are also concerned that the bill is timid—it will not make a huge change to land ownership patterns in Scotland. We wanted a public interest test to underpin the bill. Land is an economic driver, and the wellbeing of a community that lives on the land depends on the actions of the landowner. The landowner can either develop a community or be a dead hand upon it.

We have seen that, where communities have bought their own land, economic development has increased and co-operative working, joint enterprise and private business have flourished. It is in the interests of a community landowner for that to happen; they are answerable to their community and honour bound to work in the public interest. That is not the case for private landowners, and nothing in the bill imposes duties on a landowner to work in the public interest. Scottish Labour proposed a public interest test for those who buy land, but, sadly, it was voted down.

The Scottish Government is selling Kinloch castle on Rùm. It is looking to sell to a person who will take seriously their duties to the community. The property details specify that bids should include a statement—which will be shared with the community—that sets out how they will use the castle and how they will support nature, and promote the sustainability, culture and economy of the Isle of Rùm. If that is required for Rùm, should it not be required for every community?

We were keen that smaller areas of land should have been included in the bill. We welcome the reduction of the minimum size of included areas of land to 1,000 hectares, but that brings only 754 holdings into the scope of the bill. We would have preferred to see land areas of 500 hectares included—that would have brought 2,641 landholdings within the scope of the provisions.

Douglas Lumsden: Will the member take an intervention?

Rhoda Grant: Very briefly.

Douglas Lumsden: If the threshold had been reduced, how many family farms would it have brought into the scope of the bill?

The Presiding Officer: I will give you the time back, Ms Grant.

Rhoda Grant: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

It would have been very few—more than 97 per cent of family farms are below that acreage.

Neither does the bill take into scope cumulative holdings, so the landlords of huge swathes of Scottish land will not be brought within the scope of the bill. That is increasingly a problem when organisations are buying up parcels of land to offset carbon. Those organisations seek to greenwash polluting activity elsewhere. Any landowner that does not have the wellbeing of the communities that live and work at the heart of what they do will cause damage to those communities by pursuing their own interests over those of the people who live and work on the land.

We are also disappointed that the bill does not extend the community right to buy to urban areas. Empowering communities in those areas would have been a game changer—it would have tackled poverty and ensured that developers could not hold those communities to ransom.

What the bill does do—and the reason that we will support it—is stop off-market sales. Currently, land is changing hands without the knowledge of the people who live and work on it. The bill will change that by informing communities of sales and allowing them to consider how they deal with them.

The bill also introduces lotting to Scotland. We have not had that before, so we will watch with interest how it might impact on land ownership patterns in Scotland.

Land management plans will give communities an insight into the plans of their landowner and an input to how those plans impact on them. Again, it will be interesting to see whether that gives communities a greater say in land use.

We will support the bill, but we know that it is unfinished business and that the next Parliament will have to pick things up again. However, one thing that the Government can do here and now to empower communities and encourage community ownership is to ensure the future of the Scottish land fund, which is an essential means of funding community ownership and land reform. The Scottish Government had previously committed to having a £20 million fund by the end of the parliamentary session. That commitment has not been met. As the Parliament goes into purdah, it is estimated that 150 projects, with an estimated value of £23 million, are waiting.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): Ms Grant, will you please conclude?

Rhoda Grant: I ask the cabinet secretary to expedite applications so that those projects can begin work for their communities before the end of the session.

18:07

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands) (Green): Land is power, and those who have the land have the power. Nowhere is that more acutely felt than in the Highlands and Islands—the region that I represent—which has some of the most concentrated land ownership in Europe.

Scotland has a population of 5.5 million, yet half our country is owned by just over 400 people—a truly tiny minority. They are aristocrats, absentee billionaires, international corporations and minor royalty from around the world. Some are so secretive that their neighbours do not even know who they are. The question at the heart of the debate is whether the bill will meaningfully address that inequality in land ownership.

At minimum, any land reform legislation that is worthy of support needs to challenge the imbalance of power that comes from monopoly land ownership; provide transparency over who owns Scotland; and enable more communities to have a say—and a stake—in the activities that take place around them.

I thank stakeholders who have engaged with those questions over the past year of scrutiny of the bill. In particular, Community Land Scotland and Revive coalition members have been tireless advocates for ambitious legislation. My thanks go also to those stakeholders who, even though we fundamentally disagree on the issues at hand, took the time to meet me and my Scottish Green colleagues. I also thank the Parliament's clerks and the bill team for their engagement on Green amendments.

After many hours of deliberation across the past two weeks, it is clear that the bill has not progressed meaningfully from where it started. My central disappointment lies with part 1. The measures simply do not go far enough in addressing the issue at the very heart of land reform, which is that the majority of Scotland's land is owned and controlled by a tiny minority. As stage 3 began, I made it clear to the Scottish Government that, in order to vote for the bill, I would need to be confident that I could look constituents in the eye and tell them that we had made significant progress and that the legislation had genuinely improved things. I regret that I am not in that position this evening.

First, the legislation does not do nearly enough to ensure that public interest considerations are at the heart of the new measures. If Green amendments had been accepted, there would be legislation that places a limit on how much land an individual could own and requires them to demonstrate how they will use it for the public benefit.

Secondly, there is nothing in the bill to require that land management plans be implemented by land managers. That is a crucial set of provisions that could become a box-ticking exercise.

Thirdly, the measures do not tackle the concentration of land ownership—an issue that was consulted on by the Government, but never taken forward.

I appreciate that some Scottish Green amendments were accepted by the Government at stage 3. In particular, there will be stronger requirements on large landowners to set out how they will manage their land for nature recovery. In an era of climate and nature emergency, everyone must play their part. I am also glad that ministers will make it easier for new hutting communities to be established on public land.

However, this is not a time to pat ourselves on the back for making small changes at the edges. This is a moment for everyone to assess whether the bill addresses the fundamental purpose of land reform legislation. Without robust measures to challenge concentrated ownership, we are managing the symptoms while leaving the disease untreated. We are asking communities to continue their struggles without giving them the tools that they truly need.

The Scottish Greens cannot vote for this bill with enthusiasm. This legislation falls far short of what Scotland needs. This Government has once again refused to stand up to the landed elites and vested interests, and communities are paying the price.

We accept that the bill—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Burgess, you will need to bring your remarks to a close. You are over your time.

Ariane Burgess: We accept that the bill moves things marginally in the right direction, but the pace of change is glacial. However, we will not dismiss the improvements that have been made.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please conclude, Ms Burgess.

Ariane Burgess: For those reasons, the Scottish Greens will abstain on the bill.

18:11

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): This has been a marathon process, which makes it all the more important that we acknowledge the work that has been put in by all those who have contributed. That includes parliamentary staff across the board; members of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee; the cabinet secretary and her officials, who have kept Opposition spokespeople updated, including with meetings at the margins of the Scottish

Fishermen's Federation dinner; and the stakeholders who have given evidence and provided briefings.

As a side note, it has been particularly gratifying to see Andy Wightman back in the Parliament—sadly, up in the public gallery rather than down here in the chamber. On occasions like this, his absence is keenly felt.

Whatever we might think about 400 amendments being lodged at stage 3 and the fact that so many were pressed to a vote, that has undoubtedly enabled debate to take place on a wide range of issues over the final four days of scrutiny.

The issue of land reform is one that successive Parliaments and Governments have wrestled with over the years. Despite previous reforms, the need for further action is indisputable. As others have observed, the concentration of land ownership in Scotland has continued to increase, resulting in a small number of individuals controlling an overwhelming proportion of privately owned land in this country, often shrouded in mystery.

There is also compelling evidence that the inequitable distribution of land ownership has resulted in fewer opportunities for rural communities to invest in affordable housing and economic development projects. When those communities cannot meaningfully participate in the land buying process, vital opportunities for community growth are lost. The Scottish Liberal Democrats therefore strongly support much greater transparency in land ownership, as well as steps to help to revitalise our rural and island communities.

How far to go with reform has always been contested, making agreement difficult and consensus probably impossible. For example, balancing the rights of tenants and landlords requires care if unintended consequences and perverse incentives are to be avoided. The requirement for land management plans is reasonable and the threshold that will be set will offer consistency and is broadly proportionate. At the same time, however, those plans must not create an unreasonable burden by being overly complex. I raised that point repeatedly with the cabinet secretary. The Scottish Liberal Democrats supported amendments in that area. Likewise, we supported amendments to make clear that the maximum fine for breaches of plans, which is set at £40,000, will apply only in cases of repeat offences. That was raised with me by constituents in Orkney, and it is something that I highlighted to the cabinet secretary on numerous occasions.

There were also concerns about the bill's proposed changes to resumption, especially in relation to tenancies under the Agricultural

Holdings (Scotland) Act 2003 and incontestable notice to quit in relation to tenancies under the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991. I recognise that, in response, the cabinet secretary lodged amendments at stage 3 that aimed to address some of the issues that were raised by NFUS and others, particularly around changes to 2003 tenancies.

For some, the changes will not go far enough, but I hope that the matter can be kept under review. For that to happen, we will need to understand how the legislation works after contact with reality. I am therefore pleased that Parliament agreed to changes that will require land commissioners and the Scottish ministers to undertake a thorough review of the "impact and effectiveness" of the bill after five years. I congratulate Martin Whitfield on securing that commitment and wiring in post-legislative scrutiny on an issue that I confidently predict, as others have done, will continue to occupy Parliaments and Governments for years to come.

At this point, however, although the bill is far from perfect, I believe that it represents a step in the right direction, which Scottish Liberal Democrats will support at decision time this evening.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate, with speeches of up to four minutes from back benchers.

18:15

Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): Since it was reconvened, this Parliament has delivered radical and ambitious land reform, providing a challenge to the highly concentrated pattern of land ownership across huge areas of Scotland that a number of members have mentioned.

The final version of the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill that we have in front of us this evening is the product of, among many other things, a parliamentary marathon of amendments over the past week or two. I know that there are people in the gallery—at least one of them is a constituent of mine—who have loyally followed the bill's progress evening after evening and long into the night. That indicates the desire to see the bill passed. In fact, many people have been in touch with me urging the Parliament to pass the bill. That is because the bill represents a vital step forward in allowing communities across Scotland to have a greater say over what happens to the land on which they live.

The land is an important part of who we are, and I am proud of our long-standing commitment to delivering meaningful land reform and diversifying land ownership in the public interest. However, as

others have rightly pointed out, the concentration of land ownership can be seen to have worsened in recent years, with 421 landowners owning 50 per cent of private rural land. That number is down from 440 in 2012. That is despite significant progress in the number of communities that have been supported through the Scottish land fund in achieving their buyouts, in both rural and urban areas, since then. We should be proud of that progress. That said, we must do more to achieve our land reform objectives. We must close loopholes and make it easier for communities to successfully acquire land for the common good.

During our deliberations in Parliament, some members have argued that the bill does not go far enough, while Mr Mountain has, with a very thorough efficiency, sought to oppose every part of the bill for going too far. I consider the bill to be a helpful and pragmatic measure, although I am sure that we will return to the topic in future.

Among many other measures, the bill will introduce lotting provisions, which will allow communities to buy smaller portions of land on an estate's sale. Prior notifications of land sales for communities will also be implemented through the legislation. That is important because it will prevent situations in which communities have land sold from underneath them without even being told about it. The requirement for land management plans will require greater transparency and engagement and proactive use of land assets in line with national objectives.

As of 2023, 72 per cent of community-owned land in Scotland was located in the Western Isles. In my constituency, more than 75 per cent of people live on land that is community owned. That fact is not unconnected to the role that the islands have played in the long fight across Scotland for land rights. The crofters war of the late 19th century, in response to the Highland clearances, secured the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act 1886, while later land raids led to the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919.

Looking forward, it is important to use the legislative levers that are available to us to deal with the problems of the future. I am thinking of the need to prevent asset management companies—the names Gresham House and Oxygen Conservation spring unbidden to mind—from any aggressive acquisition of huge swathes of our hillsides. The on-going challenge for us all will be to ensure that local communities remain able to make productive and positive use of the land around them for the benefit of everyone living in their area. The bill will enable exactly that.

The bill represents an important step forward in Scotland's progress on land reform and will empower communities to give themselves a

future. I urge members to vote to pass the bill at decision time this evening.

18:20

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I remind members, as I constantly do, of my entry in the register of members' interests. I am the owner of 202 hectares of land. I rent about 200 hectares of land under a non-agricultural tenancy. I also have about five hectares of land under an Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991 tenancy. I have feet in many camps when it comes to land, and I have always supported land reform.

I echo the thanks that Mr McArthur put on the record to those people who have helped members to get amendments through. In particular, I thank the legislation team for being so amenable to the few amendments that I put forward.

I started off looking at the bill bearing in mind the information that had been given to me by a land reformer who said that it would not deliver what the cabinet secretary said that it would and by a legal adviser who said that it was "junk law". This is the Scottish Parliament's third attempt at land reform. None of it has really delivered what the Parliament wanted, and we predict that there will be a fourth attempt. What we know is that the first attempt at land reform resulted in Andrew Stoddart's court case, and the second resulted in the *Salvesen v Riddell* case—and at what cost to the Scottish Government? We will find out, because I have put in some freedom of information requests that will, no doubt, prove that cost.

My amendments did not seek to do what Dr Allan suggested, which was to kibosh the bill; rather, they sought to prevent the cabinet secretary—or probably her successor—from facing the legal challenges that I believe that the bill will result in.

There are some clear casualties of the bill, investor confidence being one and tenancies being another. Why are those important? We need investor confidence if we are going to address our net zero targets, including on planting and looking after the remote areas of Scotland. I have looked back at the details, which show that, in March 2023, Lorna Slater—sadly, she is not here—signed a groundbreaking £2 billion investment deal with private investors and the bank Hampden & Co. The aim was to get them to invest in some of the targets that we sought to achieve. This land reform bill will not help to promote that investment. We can argue about whether that is right or wrong, but the Government does not have the money available to invest in some of the targets that we need to achieve. If members do not believe that, I point to the outstanding letters from Scottish

Financial Enterprise and from renewables and forestry companies on their fears about the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. The bill will make real problems for us.

As far as tenancies are concerned, let me be clear that changing the law retrospectively comes with huge problems. We know that there has been a decrease in tenancies—I have raised that for long enough.

Part of the bill that I found particularly difficult is the exclusion of large landowners from being the land and community commissioner. It seems to be fine for ex-ministers and ex-special advisers to take that role, but not large landowners. I think that that is wrong. Fundamentally, it goes against the grain of everything that I believe about the Scottish Parliament in relation to equality.

We have debated amendments, including a lot of my amendments. I am very glad that, in most cases, they were debated in the spirit in which they were lodged. However, at one stage, one of them was not, and that was sad. My mother, who is long since deceased, would have said that that was probably because the person was overtired and that they should not have done it in that way. My mother often had wise things to say. I will leave it at that, but I am afraid that I cannot support the bill in the way in which it is drafted.

18:24

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): Presiding Officer, 2025 is a year of anniversaries. It is a quarter of a century since the death of Donald Dewar, who warned that Scotland's land had

“too much control in too few hands”—
that radical action was needed.

It is 60 years this year since the death of Tom Johnston, who began his great work on land ownership with a general indictment of the

“various divinities, dignities and privileges”

of Scots landlords as a class. Our

“Old Nobility is not noble”,

he famously concluded.

It is exactly half a century since the publication of the first “Red Paper on Scotland”, in which John McEwen boldly set his objective to see

“the stranglehold of our mainly absentee landlordism destroyed”,

and in which Jim Sillars argued that, for democratic socialist land policies to be applied, it required the

“devolvement of legislative power from Westminster to a Scottish Parliament.”

But, oh, how we have let them down. How we have let the people down with the timidity of our action, including the rejection of radical amendments to this bill.

This may be my last chance to speak on land reform in this Parliament. My faithfulness to this cause stretches back almost four decades, when, under the tutelage of Alex Falconer, I wrote a short pamphlet entitled “Who Owns Mid-Scotland and Fife?” In it, we exposed that, in the old Central region, including part of the area that I am now privileged to represent in this Parliament, fewer than 100 landowners—92, in fact—owned 50 per cent of all the land. It became yet another compelling reason for me to join the campaign for a Scottish Parliament and why I stood for election to be a member of the Scottish Parliament.

It has been a privilege to be here. I have loved almost every minute of it, but I will leave it, as I entered it, with half of Scotland still owned by fewer than 500 people. I will leave it as campaigners like Andy Wightman have shown: over the last decade, land ownership in Scotland has not got more diverse, it has got narrower; the estates have grown larger and the owners fewer; and there is more capital accumulation, more land monopoly and more ownership concentration, not less.

I will leave it, as well, to the echo of speeches in this debate by Edward Mountain, to whom I bear no personal animus, but they are speeches that could have been delivered by any member of the official roll of the baronetage at any time over the last four centuries.

Although the cabinet secretary told us that this bill is a

“significant step on our land reform journey”

and that the Government was

“committed to delivering ambitious proposals”,—[*Official Report*, 26 March 2025; c 83, 80.]

I will leave Parliament knowing, as this Government must know, that this bill is neither ambitious nor significant, that it will not fundamentally tackle the power imbalance that exists, that this bill will make no structural difference to the distribution of land ownership and that class inequality will remain Scotland's hereditary curse.

The final words of that pamphlet written all those years ago, when I was in my 20s, I still stand by. So let them be my final words today:

“Inevitably there should be a move toward the common ownership of land in order that the benefits of what is after all a natural gift can be once again shared by the whole community.”

It will be for those elected to the next Parliament to rekindle the vitality of those ideas, to think big and

act radical; to take on those vested interests. Although, by then, I will be gone, I will be outside Parliament—this cause of land justice, this demand for equality and this claim of right for our democracy will forever, forever, have my undying support.

18:28

Ariane Burgess: The contributions that we have heard today reflect the depth of feeling about land reform across the chamber. I share the disappointment expressed by Rhoda Grant that smaller areas of land were not brought into the bill's scope. Liam McArthur reminded us that inequality in land ownership creates fewer opportunities for rural communities to evolve. Alasdair Allan talked about the history of the struggle for land reform, going back as far as 1886.

However, I must return to my central concern, which is that part 1 does not go far enough. Without putting in place robust measures to address concentrated ownership, we are treating the symptoms while leaving the disease untouched. Let me be specific about what is missing. The legislation does not do nearly enough to ensure that public interest outweighs private interest when it comes to how the land around us is used. Had our proposal for a public interest test been accepted, we could have had legislation that placed a limit on how much land an individual can own and required them to demonstrate how they would use it for the public benefit. That would have been meaningful land reform.

Instead, the bill asks communities to continue their struggles without giving them the tools that they truly need. The concentration of ownership persists. The imbalance of power remains. Communities across the Highlands and Islands and rural Scotland will still find themselves fighting uphill battles against landowners who control vast estates but face little accountability and limited transparency about their intentions.

As I said earlier, the Scottish Greens cannot vote whole-heartedly for this legislation given that part 1 of the bill falls so far short of what Scotland needs and what our communities deserve. However, I acknowledge the achievement for Scotland's tenant farmers in part 2 of the bill.

Recently, I was contacted by a tenant farmer in my region who wants to do more nature-friendly farming but has found themselves stymied by a lease that,

"Although written in 1982, reads like something from the 1800s."

They added:

"It doesn't reflect the progressive and modern lens we approach farming with ... All we want here is to be able to farm in a way that allows us to earn a living, contribute to our communities, produce high quality food and look after our environment."

I am glad to have been able to make some small changes at stage 2 that will allow tenants to take up regenerative agricultural practices and convert to organics without needing permission from their landlord. Such measures are a start as we shift our agricultural policy towards supporting those farmers who are looking to innovate because of the environmental changes that we expect to see in the coming decades.

This is not the end of the journey. I say to those in Community Land Scotland, to Revive coalition members and to communities across Scotland who are fighting for land justice: we, the Scottish Greens, remain absolutely committed to the transformative land reform that Scotland requires. The Government's bill might not deliver that, but the movement for change continues to grow stronger. Today is not the end of the road, and we will not give up the fight for proper land reform.

It is my sincere hope that the next Scottish Parliament will finally deliver bold legislation to address the concentration of land ownership, to tackle the neglected issues of urban land reform and to improve the community right to buy process so that more communities can participate. The concentration of land ownership in Scotland is not inevitable; it is a political choice, and political choices can be changed. The Scottish Greens will continue the fight.

18:32

Mercedes Villalba (North East Scotland) (Lab): It is a great privilege to close this debate for Scottish Labour and to speak alongside my comrades Rhoda Grant and Richard Leonard. I start by paying tribute to everyone who has engaged in the land reform process. Any success in the bill that will diversify land ownership in Scotland is the collective effort of everyone who responded to the consultations, everyone who provided expert advice evidence and everyone who challenged the Scottish Government to make the bill count. That work will continue, because it must.

Scotland is now prey to mega lairds, private corporations that buy up land for the benefit of portfolio shareholders and investors. Their accumulation of land, wealth and power is often dressed up as climate friendly or environmentally responsible. Let us be clear: it is not.

Take Oxygen Conservation, whose stated business is supposedly to help fight the climate and biodiversity crises. It has quickly taken ownership of numerous Scottish landholdings and

estates. Most recently, it bought up BrewDog's failed Lost Forest estate, which has taken its total holdings to nearly 20,000 hectares. However, its extractive business model and inadequate community engagement have raised alarm bells among land reform experts. A revenue model that is based on polluting carbon credit sales will not deliver what our land, climate and natural environment so desperately need. Aggressive acquisitions and the quick flipping of land as a portfolio treats one of our most priceless common goods as a cheap commodity to be traded by the wealthiest.

That is why it is right that, under the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, some large landholdings will be required to produce land management plans to show how they intend to manage and develop the land. I truly hope that those modest changes make a difference. However, because of the Government's refusal to accept my amendments to lower the threshold and introduce a presumed limit on ownership of 500 hectares, more large landholdings will be left out of the scope of the bill than will be included in it. Instead, the Scottish Government has taken a blinkered approach to ownership and aggregation of landholdings. Concentrated land ownership is a nationwide issue, yet the Scottish Government has refused to take a nationwide approach to aggregate land holdings.

Gresham House is now the second-largest private landowner in Scotland, thanks to 244 separate landholdings across roughly 74,000 hectares. That kind of superscale land ownership will barely be impacted by the bill, however, as only a handful of those 244 fragments are over the 1,000-hectare threshold. That is why I am proud that my amendment to review whether the size of the areas of land included in the bill needs to be reduced was passed yesterday. I look forward to seeing that review take place.

The examples of Oxygen Conservation and Gresham House demonstrate the inadequacy of Scotland's current system and how the Scottish Government's bill—while welcome—will not go far enough. Both examples show how private corporations will always seek private profit before public good, even while claiming that they are acting in the public interest. That is why it was so important to have a forward-facing public-interest assessment of buyers of land in the bill. It is deeply disappointing that, even after months and years of scrutiny, evidence and amendment, the Scottish Government did not accept that.

Large-scale and corporate land ownership cannot contribute to action on inequality while its decisions on land ownership and land management remain focused on extracting wealth. Instead, we need land ownership that works for

people, not profit. The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill was an opportunity to challenge the current pattern of land ownership and to create a fairer, more accountable and more democratic system of diversified land ownership. It remains to be seen how much of an impact its provisions will have but, given what was left out of the bill, it seems like yet another missed opportunity from the Scottish Government.

18:37

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland)

(Con): As we come to the end of the bill process, I can only reflect on the many substantive contributions from colleagues. As an Opposition, we have tried to amend this flawed bill, bringing forward the concerns of industry groups, rural bodies and our own constituents in order to make the bill workable, but, to be honest, it has been like putting a sticking plaster on a broken leg.

I have to congratulate the Scottish National Party Government on one thing: uniting so many people in their view that the bill will not bring about the change that they desire. We heard time and again at committee from witnesses, including estate managers and land reform campaigners, that the bill would not meet the aims that had been set out. Many witnesses expressed concerns to us about the impact that the bill would have on their livelihoods and communities. We heard about the risks to financing that are being brought about by the uncertainty caused by the bill—a point that was raised by Edward Mountain, who said that the bill will not boost investors' confidence as we need it to.

We heard from farmers who fear that large family farms will now be brought into the scope of the bill, with the threshold for land management plans being reduced at a time when Labour's cruel family farm tax is just filtering through. I have also heard from farmers who want to retire and rent out parts of their land to the next generation but who feel that it is too risky. Their concern is that they would never get the land back, because of what the bill is doing. That is an unintended consequence of the bill that will make it harder for new farmers to rent land and get into running their own farms. It is, as Tim Eagle said, the opposite of what we should be doing.

There is also uncertainty around lotting and what happens with staff. Let us remember that estates are businesses that pay their taxes, employ people in rural areas and contribute to their local communities. If an estate is sold, the Government can decide that the business needs to be split up, in effect. In instances where that happens, the bill is silent about what happens to the employees. The bill is bad news for estate workers.

We have heard from groups such as Scottish Land & Estates, which said that the proposals were worrying, and NFUS, which told us that the bill “could damage rural businesses”. The head of land and property at Turcan Connell described the bill as “junk law”. Yet, in the light of such widespread discontent among those who know what they are talking about, we have found ourselves at this point. The cabinet secretary said that “change is possible”, but I do not feel that the bill will bring the change that is required, and most of the witnesses at committee said the same.

Tim Eagle was right to recognise the amount of work that has been done, especially by Parliament staff—I agree with that completely. I also commend the way in which the cabinet secretary has approached the bill and reached out to other groups. Tim Eagle said that some of the large estates are

“the quiet engine of rural Scotland.”

He also pointed out that the area of tenanted land in Scotland has reduced dramatically—unfortunately, however, the bill will not reverse that trend.

Rhoda Grant made a good point about the community right to buy, which is still under review. We also heard at committee that it should have been part of the bill, and I think that that has been a missed opportunity.

Liam McArthur said that land management plans should not be overburdensome and complicated. I agree, and we need to keep a close eye on that when the regulations come forward.

I agreed with something that Mercedes Villalba said about the concerns around Oxygen Conservation and Gresham House. We have to remember that Gresham House was backed by the Scottish National Investment Bank.

The Scottish Conservative group remains opposed to this flawed bill, and we agree with the many voices outside the Parliament that have raised significant concerns. We will vote against the bill this evening, and we call on other colleagues to listen to their rural communities and constituents and to join us in voting no.

18:41

Mairi Gougeon: I am grateful to members across the chamber not only for their contributions today, but for their significant contributions during the bill’s passage through Parliament. It is clear from the contributions today what passion there is around the subject and what land reform means to people. Land reform is an emotive issue, and rightly so. It affects us all, whether we live in rural or urban Scotland. How the land beneath or

around us is owned, used or managed matters, as does access to land, which is why the bill matters.

No single piece of legislation could possibly tackle all the issues that we face, which have been centuries in the making. I recognise the points that Rhoda Grant raised during the debate, and I know that we have more work to do. A lot of that work is already under way, whether it is the community right to buy review or the work on compulsory purchase orders and compulsory sales orders. We also have the review provisions that were passed in Martin Whitfield’s amendments, which means that there will be more to learn and more to do in the future.

Tim Eagle made some important points about recognising the importance of opportunities for the next generation and new entrants to farming. He made the point that the Scottish Government should lead by example, and I absolutely agree with that. I fully expect our public landholdings to lead the way in the creation of new small landholdings. That would be the perfect example, now that we will be able to create new small landholdings for the first time in a century.

In closing, I want to reflect on this historic moment in our land reform journey and look forward to what can be better days ahead. In James Robertson’s literary masterpiece “And the Land Lay Still”, he makes it clear that the land and the people do not lie still. His novel sweeps across people and places, and across the latter half of the 20th century, documenting the huge changes and the upheaval that took place in Scotland at that time, in no small part contributing to the very Parliament in which we now sit.

That, in essence, is the point of land reform: to ensure that how we use and steward our land—one of Scotland’s most precious resources—does not lie still. We must embrace change and look forward to a fairer future and one of opportunity for all our people, not just those who, either through birth, wealth or inheritance, have had the privilege of ownership and control of this land—our land.

We must use the Parliament’s legislative powers to benefit the many and not the few. They must benefit our tenant farmers, building on their hard-won rights to ensure that they thrive in the decades ahead; our communities, which have the right to feel that they belong and that the land on which they live and work belongs to them, should they so wish it; and people who have always wanted to live on the land. The new powers will help to turn those dreams into reality for many.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has helped to make the bill possible. They include the Scottish Land Commission, which undertook initial research and then advised on the bill’s provisions over a number of years, and the more

than 500 individuals and groups who contributed their expertise, knowledge and views to the consultation. I thank the bill team for their tremendous efforts and work on the bill, and all the stakeholders who have engaged with me as well as the bill team throughout the bill's passage. The bill is stronger for that engagement.

I thank the committees that scrutinised the bill for their work. I also give a general thank you to MSPs across the chamber. I genuinely want to thank you all, as I know that you have all taken a keen interest in the bill. I really appreciate MSPs taking time to engage with me. Even when we have not always agreed, those discussions have been valuable.

There are also the MSPs and ministers who came before and who, over the quarter century of devolution, began Scotland's land reform journey. Their tireless efforts have led us to this moment. They include the late Donald Dewar, the late Winnie Ewing, George Lyon, the late John Farquhar Munro, Rob Gibson, Peter Peacock, Aileen McLeod and, of course, Roseanna Cunningham.

Land reform reminds us that lasting change is never owned by one party or generation; it has always been a joint endeavour, forged by those who seek a fairer Scotland. The bill represents an ambitious step forward on our land reform journey. I am proud of what we have achieved together and honoured to have led the bill through Parliament on behalf of the Scottish ministers.

Today also marks a poignant moment for me, as this is the last major piece of legislation that I will take through the Parliament as a cabinet secretary. I grew up in and represent the communities across Angus and the Mearns, among landscapes that mean so much to me, so this bill is special.

Throughout the bill's passage, I have been inspired by another of Scotland's great classic novels and one of my personal favourites, which is set in the Mearns: "Sunset Song". No one describes the beauty of that landscape, the ties and struggles of community and the pull and the draw of the land better than Lewis Grassie Gibbon. In the words of Chris Guthrie:

"I longed to hear the Scots words of my parents from my far off young life, through all of their days and fight with the land—nothing endured but the land.

People who had lived here were but a breath—but the land endured.

At that moment in the gloaming, I felt I was the land".

I hope that all of us who share the belief that change can and must happen will support the bill and will together ensure a brighter and fairer future

for the people of Scotland. I commend the bill to Parliament.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill at stage 3.

Business Motion

18:47

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S6M-19534, 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 11 November 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Ministerial Statement: Wildfire Summit

followed by Stage 1 Debate: UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

4.15 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 12 November 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Constitution, External Affairs and
Culture, and Parliamentary Business;
Justice and Home Affairs

followed by Scottish Green Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 13 November 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Education and Skills

followed by Ministerial Statement: Winter
Preparedness and National Planning
Priorities for Health and Social Care

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Scottish Parliament
(Recall and Removal of Members) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 18 November 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 19 November 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 20 November 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Community Wealth
Building (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Community Wealth
Building (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 10 November 2025, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S6M-19535, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument. I ask the minister to move the motion on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Release of Prisoners (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.—[*Graeme Dey*]

18:48

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I will not vote tonight to release more than 1,000 criminals early from prison. Yes, the Scottish National Party's failure to come up with a holistic justice strategy has led to our prisons being dangerously overcrowded, but throwing open the gates and freeing criminals early is not the solution.

During the passage of the Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025, the cabinet secretary said:

"The measures in this Bill will bring about a sustained reduction in the prison population".

As I warned, that was nonsense then and it remains nonsense now. Indeed, Victim Support Scotland told the Criminal Justice Committee that early release is

"not effective in reducing the prison population in the medium or longer term."

Scotland's chief inspector of prisons has pointed out that short-term releases do not reduce the numbers over the longer term, because they do not

"address any of the root causes of the problems."

The cabinet secretary will argue that early release provides short-term relief, but Scottish Prison Service statistics show that 11 of our 17 prisons were full mere days after the previous early release programme.

Early release only exposes the public to risk, as data shows high levels of reoffending by previous early-release prisoners. It retraumatizes victims, it diminishes respect for our courts and it exposes the SNP's failure to expedite the over-budget and delayed HMP Glasgow and HMP Highland.

Do not forget the SPS's recent warning that a new prison the size of HMP Grampian or HMP Shotts would be needed to address the overcrowding—a new prison that the cabinet secretary refuses to even contemplate because, as she put it,

"If we build, they will come."—[*Official Report, Criminal Justice Committee, 29 October 2025; c 8.*]

However, there are alternatives. The Government could heed prison inspectors and address the 27 per cent of the prison population that is on remand. It could note His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland's comments that the long-term population is key and look at its proposed solutions. It could use existing powers to bring in alcohol and drug tags to reduce risks and reoffending, as is the case in England.

Instead, the Government presents MSPs with what was originally a knee-jerk response to a wholly predictable crisis as the sole default option, with no guarantee that it will not be extended to long-term prisoners in the future.

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): Will the member take an intervention?

Liam Kerr: I am very sorry, but I have only three minutes.

Presiding Officer,

"Public confidence in Scotland's criminal justice system is being eroded with these measures."

Victim Support Scotland said that, and it is right. A Government that rips up sentences that are independently imposed on criminals by judges for a very good reason makes a mockery of our justice system, weakens deterrence and sends precisely the wrong message to victims and communities.

I will not vote to expose the public to risk, trash respect for our courts and sentencing and retraumatise victims, simply to absolve the Government of its failure of foresight and planning. Those MSPs who do should hang their heads in shame.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call the cabinet secretary to respond.

18:51

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance): I start by acknowledging the gravity of the decision that I ask Parliament to make this evening, and I remind colleagues that every decision taken by me and the Government has been made under full parliamentary scrutiny and that parliamentary approval has been sought when it has been required.

I also wish to inform Parliament that the prison population today is 8,431, which is a new record high and a milestone that few of us would have wanted to reach. The Scottish Prison Service's assessed capacity tolerance has been breached on a number of occasions. Ten of our prisons are at red risk status, and there is a risk of non-

compliance with our statutory and legal obligations. Therefore, doing nothing is not an option.

The emergency action for which I seek Parliament's approval is critical to ensuring the safe and secure operation of our prisons and the health and safety of those who work in them. In short, I seek to ensure that our prisons can continue to accommodate those who pose the greatest risks. I know that many members of the Parliament and many of those who work in the justice system and, indeed, victim support organisations have narrated the need for longer-term solutions to secure a stable and sustainable prison population, and I agree with them. In fact, I have been advocating for that and, in my view, I have laid the foundations for that with, among other things, the establishment of the independent sentencing and penal commission, which will report to me at the end of this year.

I continue my commitment to that, to the expansion of community justice and to doing more than that, including with the use of electronic monitoring and widening the scope. That is in addition to increasing capacity in the prison estate, as well as completing two new prisons.

It remains to be seen who, at the end of the day, will be prepared to engage with and debate the evidence about what works to reduce offending and increase the rehabilitation of offenders to keep our communities safe.

I noted Mr Kerr's comments about the need to reduce the remand population and manage prisoners differently and, of course, the use of electronic monitoring.

However, right now, we have to reach a position of stability to enable more permanent change and reform. The challenge for us as a Parliament and, indeed, as a country is that, if we do not want to remain in a cycle of shorter-term decisions, we will need to take bolder and longer-lasting action.

This is absolutely not a decision that I have taken lightly, but it is a decision that is now necessary. I absolutely recognise that the early release of prisoners will be cause for concern for victims. That is why the regulations have stringent safeguards in place, including statutory exclusions for sex offenders and those serving sentences for domestic abuse. We have also added extra exclusions for prisoners with unspent previous domestic abuse convictions or non-harassment orders. Of course, a prison governor's veto can be applied if a release poses—

Liam Kerr: Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Angela Constance: I have only three minutes, sir.

A prison governor's veto can be applied if a release poses an immediate risk of harm to an identifiable individual or group. I remind members that, last year, the figure for return to custody after earlier emergency release was 13 per cent and, following the STP40 programme, it was 5 per cent.

I want to be clear that emergency release is not the answer to addressing the prison population in the long term, but it is essential right now to providing critical relief to those who live and work in our prisons. It is my view that the legal test for emergency release has been met and that these measures are necessary and proportionate to maintain the security and good order of our prisons, as well as the safety and welfare of prisoners and staff.

The Presiding Officer: Please conclude, cabinet secretary.

Angela Constance: Emergency release will start to reduce the prison population within days, if approved, and the schedule of releases over the next six months will help to maintain its effect for that time. We can critique the past and debate the future, but tonight we must make a decision to act and not put our hands over our ears or turn our face to the wall.

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

The next item of business is consideration of four Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, to move motions S6M-19536, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, S6M-19537, on the office of the clerk, S6M-19538, on campaign recess dates and S6M-19539, on recess dates.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Carer's Assistance (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments, Revocation, Transitional and Saving Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Office of the Clerk be closed on Wednesday 24 (am), Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December 2025.

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) for the purpose of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), that the office of the clerk be closed from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive);

(b) in respect of meetings of committees and sub-committees during the pre-election campaign period, that, in rule 12.3.3, the word "normally" in the second sentence be suspended; and

(c) for the purpose of the lodging of written questions immediately prior to the pre-election campaign period, that rule 13.3.4A be suspended and replaced with—

"The last day on which written questions may be lodged in the current session is Thursday 12 March 2026."

That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive).—[*Graeme Dey*]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motions will be put at decision time.

Motion without Notice

18:57

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): I am minded to accept a motion without notice under rule 11.2.4 of standing orders that decision time be brought forward to now. I invite the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans to move the motion.

Motion moved,

That, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 6.57 pm.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

Decision Time

18:57

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S6M-19512.3, in the name of Neil Gray, which seeks to amend motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on Scotland's maternity services, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, 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)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 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) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine)

(SNP)

Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Dowe, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S6M-19512.3, in the name of Neil Gray, is: For 67, Against 53, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S6M-19512.2, in the name of Sandesh Gulhane, which seeks to amend motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on Scotland's maternity services, 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)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, 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)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 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) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast

by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S6M-19512.2, in the name of Sandesh Gulhane, is: For 54, Against 67, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S6M-19512.1, in the name of Willie Rennie, which seeks to amend motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on Scotland's maternity services, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on Scotland's maternity services, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, 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)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)

Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 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) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Regan, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (Ind)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)

Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-19512, in the name of Jackie Baillie, as amended, is: For 73, Against 27, Abstentions 20.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament is alarmed by the serious patient safety issues raised in recent inspection reports of maternity services; agrees that a national investigation into the design and delivery of maternity services should take place if Scotland's new Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce recommends it, and that it should give full consideration to staff and patient welfare; notes that the taskforce will review the findings of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's inspections into all maternity units in Scotland; recognises that no neonatal unit in Scotland is closing; notes that the new model of neonatal intensive care in Scotland was recommended by the Best Start 2017 report, following robust clinical evidence on the safest and best possible model for the sickest babies; notes that, following the downgrading of the consultant-led maternity unit at Caithness General Hospital in 2016, women in Caithness can face a 100 mile trip down the A9 to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness to give birth, and calls on the Scottish Government to commission an independent review of maternity services in Caithness.

The Presiding Officer: As motion S6M-19421 is a motion to pass a bill, the question must be decided by a division. The next question is, that motion S6M-19421, in the name of Mairi Gougeon, on the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill at stage 3, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should cast their votes now.

The vote is closed.

The First Minister (John Swinney): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I was unable to connect to the system. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, First Minister. We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (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)
Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (Ind)
Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)

Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)

Abstentions

Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Regan, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (Ind)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-19421, in the name of Mairi Gougeon, is: For 85, Against 28, Abstentions 9.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S6M-19535, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

The vote is closed.

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app would not connect. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Adamson. We will ensure that that is recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, 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)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don-Innes, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Patrick Harvie]
 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) (Ind)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)

McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Robertson, Angus (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green) [Proxy vote cast by Maggie Chapman]
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP) [Proxy vote cast by Fulton MacGregor]
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thomson, Michelle (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Choudhury, Foysol (Lothian) (Ind)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (Ind)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Marra, Michael (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 O’Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab) [Proxy vote cast by Michael Marra]
 Regan, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (Ind)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Russell, Davy (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Lab)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Reform)

Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Villalba, Mercedes (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)

Abstentions

Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (LD)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-19535, in the name of Graeme Dey, on approval of an SSI, is: For 66, Against 51, Abstentions 5.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Release of Prisoners (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The Presiding Officer: I propose to ask a single question on four Parliamentary Bureau motions. As no member has objected, the question is, that motions S6M-19536, on approval of an SSI, motion S6M-19537, on the office of the clerk, S6M-19538, on campaign recess dates, and S6M-19539, on recess dates, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

Motions agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees that the Carer’s Assistance (Miscellaneous and Consequential Amendments, Revocation, Transitional and Saving Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Office of the Clerk be closed on Wednesday 24 (am), Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December 2025.

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) for the purpose of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), that the office of the clerk be closed from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive);

(b) in respect of meetings of committees and sub-committees during the pre-election campaign period, that, in rule 12.3.3, the word “normally” in the second sentence be suspended; and

(c) for the purpose of the lodging of written questions immediately prior to the pre-election campaign period, that rule 13.3.4A be suspended and replaced with—

“The last day on which written questions may be lodged in the current session is Thursday 12 March 2026.”

That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of the pre-election campaign period from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive), the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive).

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time.

Global Climate Justice and Fair Climate Finance

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Liam McArthur): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S6M-19280, in the name of Nicola Sturgeon, on Scotland's commitment to global climate justice and fair climate finance. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I invite members who wish to speak to press their request-to-speak buttons.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that Glasgow hosted the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, which it considers built momentum for the establishment of the historic Loss and Damage Fund; understands that Scotland became the first nation to contribute to this fund with an initial £2 million pledge, demonstrating, it believes, Scotland's leadership in climate justice; considers that climate change disproportionately affects the world's most vulnerable communities that have contributed the least to the problem; believes that addressing climate impacts requires transformative fiscal reform and international cooperation to tackle economic and environmental inequalities; notes the view that industrialised countries and historic emitters, including Scotland and the UK, must meet their fair share of international climate finance, which it understands is estimated globally to be between £7.6 billion and £33 billion annually; further notes what it sees as Scotland's ongoing commitment to championing climate justice and building on Glasgow's COP26 legacy and the precedent set by Scotland's Loss and Damage Fund contributions throughout the current parliamentary session, and notes the support for continued advocacy for these principles in international fora and within climate and development strategies.

19:09

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow Southside) (SNP): It is a long time since I led a members' business debate from the back benches, and so I am very pleased to have the opportunity to do so today.

COP30—the 30th UN climate change conference of the parties—will kick off in Brazil in just a few days' time. As someone who attended five COP summits in my time as First Minister, I know how tense and high stakes they can be. Progress is never guaranteed and, more often than not, the talks go right to the wire.

However, in 2021, coming out of COP26 in Glasgow, there was cautious optimism that the world, albeit belatedly, and very tentatively, might be on the right track. There was consensus about the existential importance of taking action to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Although delivery on finance commitments continued to fall woefully short, there was a recognition that much more needed to be done. And, after a 30-year stalemate, we suddenly had momentum on the crucial issue of funding for loss

and damage—to which, as it is the focus of my motion, I will return shortly.

Four years on, though, it feels very hard to stay optimistic. Climate action seems to have fallen prey—in some parts of the world, anyway—to the culture wars. Climate change denial has even raised its head again, and we are witnessing a rearguard action from the global fossil fuel industry, which, in my opinion, threatens the just transition to clean, renewable sources of energy. As a result, it now seems all but inevitable that global warming will exceed 1.5°C over the next few years. Although I hope that that will be only a temporary overshoot, the consequences will be devastating. Momentum on finance is also at risk of stalling.

Against that backdrop, it is impossible to overstate the importance of COP30. Scotland, of course, does not sit around the COP negotiating table. However, make no mistake that, because of the leadership that we have shown on climate action generally, but especially on loss and damage, our voice is respected and listened to. I pay tribute to the First Minister for grasping that baton of leadership so firmly, as demonstrated on his recent trip to Zambia and Malawi. Nevertheless, I urge the Scottish Government to raise its voice even more loudly and to continue to match its moral leadership with tangible policy.

On emissions, we must urge action that will get the world back on the 1.5°C track as quickly as possible. Of course, we must lead by example. That means a strong climate change plan, which I know that the cabinet secretary will publish shortly. I also encourage active discussion with the United Kingdom Government on policies such as a levy on private jet flights, which the First Minister has previously expressed interest in. In my view, there should also be a formalisation of the presumption against new oil and gas development. That is not about turning off oil and gas taps immediately, but recognising that new fossil fuel developments are not in the interests of either the climate or the North Sea workforce, which urgently needs all available skills, capital and focus to be on the renewables transition.

Let me turn now to funding for loss and damage. Loss and damage is the term used to describe the catastrophic impacts of climate change that can no longer be avoided through cutting emissions or building resilience—known, respectively, as mitigation and adaptation. Those impacts do not lie in some dystopian future; they are the present reality for the world's most climate-vulnerable nations. They include hard economic losses such as infrastructure destroyed by floods or crops lost to drought. However, they also come in non-economic forms, such as the loss of cultural heritage or indigenous ways of life.

The total cost of loss and damage is estimated to be more than \$500 billion since 2020 alone, and it is anticipated that, by 2030, the annual cost will rise to \$400 billion. Of course, the countries bearing the lion's share of those costs are those that have done the least to cause climate change. It is some of the poorest people on the planet who are now paying the price of the emissions that made industrialised countries like ours very rich. Therefore—and I make no apology for saying this—funding to help pay for loss and damage is not charity, but reparation. It is a moral obligation that the global north owes to the global south.

Since 1991, when a proposal for a loss and damage fund was first mooted, developed countries have stonewalled. That started to change in Glasgow. At COP26, the Scottish Government became the first Government in the world to pledge hard cash to loss and damage. We were inspired by the work of organisations such as the Loss and Damage Collaboration. Although our pledge then of £2 million was small in a global context, our leadership forced the momentum that led to the establishment of the international fund for responding to loss and damage at COP27 in Egypt.

Our funding is already making a tangible difference. Scotland should be proud of that global leadership, but we need to keep it up. More than that, in fact, we need to intensify it, because, without firm action now, progress will stall. The international fund is due to start disbursing money soon, but it is woefully underresourced. There is a real fear that it will be bureaucratic and inefficient and, of most concern, that it will operate in a way that increases the indebtedness of global south countries. This, then, is a time to raise our voice again for the principle of loss and damage and for the quantum of funding.

Of course, here, we must put our money where our mouth is by protecting our own climate justice fund and the way in which funding is made available. On the latter point—the how—we should champion our own approach. The projects that are being funded by the Scottish Government are seen by international partners as prototypes for the world. It is the principles that underpin those projects that we must urge the international fund to follow.

First, funding must be in the form of grants, not loans. It would be unconscionable for loss and damage funding to add to already unsustainable debt burdens. Secondly, funding must not come tied up in strings. Communities must be empowered to devise their own solutions to the crisis. Thirdly, funding must cover non-economic as well as economic loss and damage. Loss of heritage, culture and traditional ways of life are no less devastating than loss of infrastructure.

The world is at a critical juncture on both climate action and climate justice, and there are many who would like to see us go backwards. It is therefore crucial that Governments such as ours continue to be strong, principled, practical and resolute in pushing progress forward. I know that the cabinet secretary will be stalking the corridors at COP30, using her voice, her experience and the hard-won credibility of the Scottish Government to help to get the world back on the right track. I wish her well.

Effectively tackling climate change and ensuring climate justice are vital imperatives that matter for the peace, security and prosperity of all of us.

19:17

Douglas Lumsden (North East Scotland) (Con): I congratulate Nicola Sturgeon on securing today's debate. I agree with her, on this occasion, that we all want to see a cleaner, greener Scotland. However, we must be honest about how we get there. In particular, we must be honest about the cost to our communities and our economy.

The motion before us paints Scotland as a global climate leader. It harks back to the days when it was claimed that world leaders were on the phone asking for advice. It references COP26, the loss and damage fund, and Scotland's contribution of £2 million. Although symbolism matters, what really counts is delivery—delivery of emissions reductions here at home, delivery of affordable energy for our people and delivery of a fair transition for the workers who have powered this nation for decades.

Right now, the Scottish Government is failing—a Scottish Government that Nicola Sturgeon led in a failed experiment of coalition with the Greens. We have missed eight out of the past 12 annual climate targets. The landfill bill ban has been delayed again. Rural communities are being asked to shoulder the burden of having monster pylons cutting through our countryside, while city ministers preach about climate justice from the comfort of Holyrood.

Thousands of skilled oil and gas workers in the north-east—my constituents—are being told that their jobs are the price of that virtue signalling. The Scottish National Party Government still has a presumption against new oil and gas—something that was reiterated by Nicola Sturgeon tonight. It has failed to back Rosebank, Cambo and Jackdaw, and it is overseeing the loss of thousands of jobs, many of which are in the north-east. Where is the justice in that?

Let me be clear: I support our journey to a more sustainable future, but that journey must be realistic and just, and it must put jobs first. It

cannot be built on shutting down our domestic energy industry before the alternatives are ready.

The UK's oil and gas sector is one of the most highly regulated and lowest carbon producing in the world. If we switch it off overnight, we will not cut emissions; we will just offshore them, along with the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Scots.

We need a managed transition, not an ideologically driven cliff edge. That means supporting the north-east, not abandoning it. It means investing in carbon capture, hydrogen and renewables alongside responsible oil and gas production—a view shared this week by Scottish Renewables—and it means recognising that energy security and affordability are not optional extras but are the foundations of any credible climate strategy.

The motion talks about international climate finance and global justice, but we should remember that there is also a duty of justice for the people of Scotland. Families have rising energy bills, farmers face uncertainty and local residents see their landscapes being scarred by mega-pylons that they neither asked for nor benefit from. They all deserve a fair hearing too, but we know that the cabinet secretary would rather meet with big business or jet around the world than talk to her own constituents.

We must deliver climate action that works with communities, not against them, which means proper consultation, realistic infrastructure plans and a focus on innovation, not imposition. Leadership on climate change is not about writing cheques or hosting conferences. It is about taking your people with you when, right now, too many feel that they are being left behind.

Let us play our part internationally, but let us also get our own house in order. Let us meet our targets, protect Scottish jobs and build the new energy economy from a position of strength, not self-inflicted weakness. That is how we will meet our commitments and become a leader on the global stage and it is how we will ensure that Scotland reaches its climate goals without damaging our communities and economy in the process.

19:21

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): I thank Nicola Sturgeon for securing this debate and very much endorse the terms of her motion, to which I added my name in support.

I welcome the debate because there has been a growing tendency of late for some in the chamber to scoff at or eschew the notion that this Parliament should discuss how we support the global south. It is of the utmost importance that we

debate those matters. Nicola Sturgeon mentioned the First Minister's recent visit to Malawi and Zambia, and the Oxfam Scotland briefing for this debate speaks positively of that visit and explains why it is important for Scotland to engage in such international activity. There has long been a consensus that we should support such activity which, we should remind ourselves, goes back to before the SNP's time in Government and was, in many ways, begun by Jack McConnell. I hope that we can once again reach a consensus that it is important for the Scottish Government to engage in such activity and for Parliament to deliberate on it.

The context for this debate is COP30, which begins next week and is a reminder of the need for collective global action. I very much share Nicola Sturgeon's concerns about the anti-science rhetoric that is creeping into our political discourse and should be tackled head on. I am sorry to say that we are hearing some of that even in this place, so we should raise our voices against it whenever we hear it.

The other context speaks more widely to our ability as a country to contribute to meeting those challenges. It is important to look back to COP26, when the world looked to Glasgow and Nicola Sturgeon provided real leadership for the Scottish Government. I was at the margins of COP26 and was pleased to be able to represent the Government at a few events. That £2 million contribution to the historic loss and damage fund was a clear demonstration of Scotland, and the Scottish Government's, commitment to recognising our historic obligations. There is a moral imperative for us to contribute in that way. As Nicola Sturgeon referred to, it is about reparations; it is also in our own enlightened self-interest.

Earlier today, at the Criminal Justice Committee, the chief constable spoke to us about some of the challenges in Scotland that arise from global geopolitical events. One of the contributors to global instability is our lack of interaction to try to find improvements for the global south. So, we should think about it not only as a moral imperative but as something that it is in our own direct self-interest to act on.

As with all such things, this debate is short, so I will not go into great detail. The Oxfam briefing lays out some of the areas of concern in the great claims that rich countries have made about their contributions. They claim to have been able to mobilise

"US\$116bn in climate finance for 2022, but the real value ... is only US\$28-35bn",

less than a third of the pledged amount.

As a result of the fact that nearly two thirds of climate finance has been made as loans, often at standard rates of interest without concessions, climate finance is adding more each year to developing countries' debt, which now stands at \$3.3 trillion. Those are not sustainable solutions to sustainability challenges.

That is something that COP30 must tackle head on. Not only must the world respond collectively, but Scotland must play its part too.

19:26

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): I congratulate Nicola Sturgeon for securing this debate.

Loss and damage is destruction that goes beyond what people can adapt to: when floods wash away homes, when crops fail year after year and when rising seas swallow villages. It is what happens when climate change pushes communities past the point of recovery.

As a member of the cross-party group on Malawi, I have heard directly from communities that have suffered losses. In Malawi, more than 80 per cent of people live in rural areas and rely on farming to survive, but storms and droughts have devastated crops, impacting on people's incomes and pushing families deeper into poverty.

In Pakistan, although communities are still recovering from the massive floods that they suffered in 2022, they have had severe floods every year since. Their Government had to borrow \$400 million to repair damaged homes and infrastructure

Climate change is overwhelmingly driven by the richest in society and by the historical and current emissions of the global north, but it is the poorest communities in the global south that are paying the price. Last week, I hosted a "Creative for climate justice" event, organised by Oxfam and Christian Aid, with primary school students who showed us their inspiring art. Their powerful and effective message was that climate justice is social justice.

Like others, I have been raising the issue of loss and damage for years in the Parliament: in committee sessions, at events and in motions in the chamber. I remember asking in 2021, before COP26, why Scotland was not showing leadership on the third pillar of the Paris agreement: loss and damage. To the credit of the then First Minister, Scotland did show that leadership at COP26 by being the first country in the global north to pledge dedicated funding—£2 million—to address loss and damage. That was a landmark moment. It sent a message across the world that wealthy nations can, and should, take responsibility for the harm caused by their emissions.

However, we cannot rest on the achievements of COP26. The world has moved on, the challenges have got bigger and, in Scotland, we have stalled at time when we need to be progressing faster. In April, the Scottish Government scrapped its climate targets, abandoning our formerly agreed-on ambitions. That has let down communities in Malawi, the Pacific and the global south that are already experiencing the climate emergency. We have failed to meet climate targets not only in eight of the past 12 years, but in nine of the past 13 years. We need action urgently. No pressure on the cabinet secretary, but we need a plan that will work, will be ambitious and will reduce our emissions—one that is not just about headlines but that makes real change in our communities.

Loss and damage are a massive issue. The fund agreed for it at COP29 was an important step, but much of it in the form of loans. As colleagues have said, that means the poorest countries are forced into debt to pay for the damage caused by others. That is not acceptable.

Scotland has shown that it is possible to deliver targeted, life-changing support through our climate justice fund. For example, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund's £500,000 project in southern Malawi is helping communities to rebuild after tropical storm Ana and cyclone Gombe. The difference that the funding has made is profound, but it is a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed.

COP30 in Brazil begins next week. We have a chance to show that Scotland's commitment to climate justice is not fading. We should use our voice internationally to push for a loss and damage fund that is accessible, transparent, and is based on grants, not loans.

Huge numbers of my constituents are calling for action. At our Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference on climate last month, the vulnerability of low-lying island countries was highlighted. That is an issue now, not for the future. We need to reflect on how we support low-income and vulnerable countries to develop new climate resilience and to use the opportunities that come from renewables, for example, to benefit them. Loss and damage is not just about rebuilding what has been destroyed: it is about a fair transition, justice and solidarity. We need to think about what kind of world we want to build for future generations.

19:31

Maggie Chapman (North East Scotland) (Green): In 2021, the world came to Glasgow for COP26. Amid the noise of pledges and the hum of negotiations, something truly historic happened;

not in the official halls of power, but in the moral leadership that was shown by Scotland. We became the first country in the world to commit funding for loss and damage. We recognised that the climate crisis is not only about carbon—it is about justice. I am so grateful for, and I pay tribute to, Nicola Sturgeon for her determination then, and her on-going commitment to loss and damage funding now.

The first £2 million, later expanded to £10 million, was not a grand act of charity. It was an act of solidarity and reparation. It said to communities in Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, “We see you; we hear you; and we will not look away.” That decision mattered. It built the momentum that led to the establishment of the global loss and damage fund at COP27—a fund that will, for the first time, help those who are living with the irreversible consequences of a crisis that they did not cause.

Scotland’s courage helped to open the door. However, opening the door is not the same as walking through it. The fund remains dangerously underresourced. Communities are still waiting for support as their homes are flooded, their crops fail and their futures disappear. Every tonne of carbon that is emitted and every missed emissions target add to the loss and damage that are borne by the poorest.

This is our challenge: to make good on the promise that began in Glasgow and to ensure that Scotland’s leadership continues not as symbolism, but as substance. We can do that by joining the fill the fund campaign, which is pressing the world’s richest nations to make grant-based donations and ensure that there is direct access for the communities that are most affected. We can do that by establishing a centre of excellence for loss and damage in Scotland, which will link our universities, non-governmental organisations, and our partners in the global south to drive innovation and justice. We can do that by matching our words with action at home and maintaining our international development fund at £15 million a year, increasing the climate justice fund to the same level, and making polluters pay through measures such as a private jet tax, or other mechanisms that will link our high-carbon economy to its real human costs.

The climate emergency is not some abstract future. It is happening now in droughts that destroy livelihoods, in the floods that wash away graveyards, and in the trauma of families being forced to leave their ancestral homes. It is an emergency that is rooted in inequality: the richest 1 per cent of humanity produces more emissions than the poorest two thirds combined.

That is not a failure of technology—it is a failure of politics and of justice. Let Scotland once again

stand on the side of justice. Let us back the call from the most climate-vulnerable nations for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty, which is a bold, fair plan to phase out fossil fuels and ensure that no worker or community is left behind.

At COP26, I said that climate justice is about more than emissions; it is about who we stand with and who we choose to protect. That remains true today. If Scotland is to be a good global citizen, our responsibility does not end at our borders. It extends to Ekules in Ethiopia, whose goats were replenished through Scottish support, and to the children in Zomba, Malawi, who can now return to school after floods. Their resilience is our legacy—let us honour that legacy.

As the writer Arundhati Roy once said,

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Let us make that world breathe more freely, through justice, through solidarity and through the courage and compassion to act as though that better world depends on us, because it does.

19:35

The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy (Gillian Martin): I thank Nicola Sturgeon for lodging her timely motion. It has been a great pleasure to hear her talk about issues that, as a former First Minister, she has led on in the past. Indeed, she championed and was the first mover on loss and damage. I am sure that she knows this, but everywhere I go in my role as Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy, whether it be to conferences such as climate action week in New York or last year’s COP in Azerbaijan—and I expect this to be the case at next week’s conference in Belém, too—the legacy of what she achieved at COP26, especially in relation to loss and damage, is mentioned again and again, because we were the leaders on that.

I would like to say that it has caused a domino effect in many other countries and economies, and that they have realised that they should give grants rather than loans and provide loss and damage funds. Unfortunately, it has not quite happened that way. I continue to call for other economies—larger economies than ours—to stump up some cash rather than just make pledges, if I can put it that way. I might be more articulate in my choice of words when I am in Belém, but, in effect, that is what it comes down to.

The impacts of climate change are clear to see, not just around the globe in places such as the global south, but at home, too. Just last week, we saw the impacts of hurricane Melissa, which left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean. The devastating scenes that we saw in Cuba and

Jamaica are a stark reminder that climate change disproportionately affects the world's most vulnerable communities—those that are the least resilient. We recognise that, as well as being the most impacted, those communities have done the least to cause the problem. Indeed, many members have made the same point.

Are we going to preside over people being displaced from their homes? Are we going to turn our backs on people who have never benefited from the industries and lifestyles that have caused that devastation? I agree with Nicola Sturgeon, Sarah Boyack and Maggie Chapman on that point. We must not turn our backs, and we must encourage other economies to take the same approach. The most vulnerable people in those communities, especially women and children—those who are already marginalised—are the ones who suffer the most.

To those people who care only about what happens within the borders of the country that they represent, I say that it is false to say that none of this has an impact on them. We could see whole nationalities being displaced. That would become a catastrophic situation globally, not only for those communities and nationalities that could no longer remain in their homelands, but for the global north, which would have to deal with the impact of that. I urge people to think about that. We must all be global citizens. We cannot afford to see countries disappearing—I am thinking of places such as Vanuatu—and whole populations having to move.

Our climate justice approach recognises the role that developed countries such as Scotland have played, historically, in causing climate change. Maggie Chapman said that the current situation is “rooted in equality”, and I absolutely agree. As Jamie Hepburn mentioned, we also acknowledge our moral responsibility to address the loss and damage caused by the impacts of climate change.

As I have said, COP26 was a real moment in time. The Scottish Government became the first global north Government to commit £2 million of funding to deal with loss and damage, but what has that funding done? It has allowed whole communities and individuals to build back after devastation. In some places, it might not even be just one moment of devastation; some communities might have had to rebuild schools, homes and farms multiple times. It is a moral imperative, but I agree with Jamie Hepburn that it is also of great importance for global stability.

However, we should also acknowledge that that amount of money falls far below what is needed to address the scale of the issue. I have to be honest: the COP in Azerbaijan last year was my first, and I felt quite dismayed. Eventually pledges were made, but I wonder how many of those pledges have resulted in money going to

developing countries. It is a sad indictment of the large economies that they feel able to pledge money but do not actually deliver it.

As many members have mentioned, in the past month, the First Minister visited Malawi and Zambia, where he met communities that are living at the front line of climate change—communities that are facing alternating drought and flooding from tropical storms and cyclones. He listened to their stories and heard how climate change can impact every part of people's lives and the deep injustice at the heart of climate change.

Tackling non-economic loss and damage is a key part of addressing those injustices. From the Bay of Bengal to the Pacific Islands to sub-Saharan Africa, we are supporting communities to address the impacts of climate change that cannot be easily quantified, such as the loss of biodiversity and culture and the mental health impact of losing one's home time and again. Community-led projects are putting women, young people and indigenous peoples at the heart of decision making. They are being empowered and funded to build back better after heart-wrenching devastation. It has never been more important for us to stand in solidarity with global south countries, and we remain steadfast in our commitment that loss and damage funding should be provided in the form of grants, not loans. I very much agree with Sarah Boyack on that point.

We are committed to equitable and fair climate finance and to exploring innovative sources, to ensure that the needs of the global south are met. If we do not do that, the world as a whole will suffer. That is not virtue signalling or whatever it was that Douglas Lumsden called it, and it is not just a moral imperative. It is a global sustainability issue.

The campaign is called cancel debt, choose hope, and I absolutely agree. The crisis that we face is great, but it is not insurmountable if the large economies of the world give just a small fraction of their money to assist those in greatest need. It is an investment not only in their future, but in ours.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, cabinet secretary. That concludes the debate, and I close this meeting of the Parliament.

Meeting closed at 19:42.

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