



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 20 March 2013

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 20 March 2013

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Health and Wellbeing

#### Diabetes (Insulin Pumps)

##### 1. Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):

To ask the Scottish Government what recent progress has been made on rolling out insulin pumps to people with diabetes. (S4O-01925)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Our target to ensure that 25 per cent of children and young people have access to insulin pump therapy is due to be reported on after March 2013. Although it is clear that good progress has been made in a number of areas, we are disappointed that some boards will not meet the target by the end of March 2013. We remain determined that boards continue to work towards this rightly ambitious target and ensure that equal access to pumps across Scotland is available. We are working closely with boards to ensure that they have plans in place to achieve the target safely.

**Kevin Stewart:** Given the understandable shortage of staff to carry out insulin pump training in Grampian, will the minister consider issuing guidelines to allow trained representatives from the companies supplying the pumps to help to roll them out to patients who require them?

**Michael Matheson:** The work that we have undertaken with boards over the past year and a half was to make sure that they have an increasing level of capacity among their staff to support patients moving on to insulin therapy.

I understand that NHS Grampian has a service level agreement in place with an insulin pump provider to help to support the training and to provide advice to adults who are moving on to insulin pumps. However, the situation is more complex in the paediatrics sector, where there has to be a much more integrated approach across a number of services, such as education and health services, and families and carers, which makes things more difficult. However, I understand that NHS Grampian is continuing to look at what further measures it can take to build on its existing capacity and staff levels to support patients moving on to insulin pumps or getting further advice on them.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** The minister will be aware of my interest in this

issue, given that I am the co-convenor of the cross-party group on diabetes.

I agree with the Scottish Government's targets for under-18s and the target to triple provision of pumps for all age groups over the next three years. However, how will the minister tackle the postcode lottery whereby some laggard health boards are simply not performing and will not meet the first target by the end of this month?

**Michael Matheson:** I recognise Mr Stewart's long-standing interest in this issue. He is right to recognise that the target is about improving not only the way in which insulin pumps are provided but the way in which services for those with diabetes are provided. I share his disappointment that a number of boards have not made the progress that I would expect. For example, the performance of NHS Highland, which covers the member's constituency, is unacceptable. Both the chair and the chief executive need to show much clearer leadership in taking forward this ambitious target much more effectively. We are working with the boards to make sure that they have adequate plans in place locally to increase the provision of insulin pumps in their area. We have asked them to report to us on a monthly basis on how they are building on that progress over the months to come.

#### Health Services (Rural Areas)

**2. Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what importance it places on the delivery of health services in rural locations. (S4O-01926)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** I place great emphasis on the need to ensure sustainable healthcare services in remote and rural areas, and I recently announced that NHS Highland will develop and test models of healthcare delivery in remote and rural areas.

**Graeme Dey:** The residents of Letham in my constituency have been pressing for general practitioner provision in the village since early 2011. A Forfar-based practice has confirmed its willingness to set up a satellite operation and the Angus community health partnership is to progress a business plan. I am sure that the cabinet secretary will understand the frustration that is felt locally that after two years still nothing definitive has happened. Will he join me in encouraging NHS Tayside to treat this now as a matter of urgency?

**Alex Neil:** I am happy to do so and I can confirm that the Angus community health partnership has been working closely with Letham residents on the issue. It is also in dialogue with the local Forfar practice, as Mr Dey said, with a

view to extending the service provision that independent contractor GPs already deliver to Letham residents. It is anticipated that services will be developed as quickly as possible, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of on-going negotiations. I will certainly do all that I can to encourage all sides to reach a quick conclusion.

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):**

The cabinet secretary will be aware of the challenges in providing GP cover in Mallaig, Acharacle and the small isles, and indeed in finding a permanent GP for Applecross. What steps is he taking to ensure that health boards that cover remote and rural communities have the finance and resources to recruit and retain GPs in their areas and can offer the contracts and support needed to make those positions attractive to possible candidates?

**Alex Neil:** Generally speaking, I think that the issue is not so much the availability of resources as it is other factors to do with recruiting and retaining GPs in rural areas, particularly in more remote and island communities. That is why, for example, three practices on the Ardnamurchan peninsula have come together to form one practice, which will allow every GP to have to work only one weekend in eight instead of one weekend in two.

A range of other factors influence the recruitment and retention of GPs in rural areas; we are addressing those and we are looking at different models in different parts of the country, particularly in the Highlands, to see what works best in particular situations. In Grampian, for example, one way in which GPs are retained is by extensive use of GPs with special interests. When I was at the Turriff hospital two weeks ago, one of the GPs there, who has a special interest in ultrasound technology, was examining people using ultrasound. I asked her whether one reason why she stayed there was the opportunity to develop such other interests and she said, "Absolutely." There are different ways to tackle this problem, but tackle it we must.

### **Acquired Brain Injury**

**3. Mark McDonald (North East Scotland)**

**(SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that people with acquired brain injuries receive appropriate treatment. (S4O-01927)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** It is thought that acquired brain injury is the most common cause of disability in working-age adults, and people with ABI can require treatment and care for a complex range of needs. For many people, the effects of ABI will often be lifelong. The emphasis on treatment will be through a multidisciplinary approach involving a wide range of services from different specialities,

including accident and emergency, general surgery, orthopaedic surgery, neurosurgery, neuro-rehabilitation and psychiatric services.

We understand that co-ordination of care for such complex needs is challenging and we have supported the development of the national managed clinical network for ABI. That national network works to promote consistency of treatment across Scotland and improve the quality of services for children and adults with ABI.

**Mark McDonald:** I recently visited Momentum in Aberdeen, which works with individuals who have an acquired brain injury. One concern that was raised was that individuals with an acquired brain injury often find it difficult to access appropriate support, as they often fall between the two stools of learning disabilities and mental health services. Will the cabinet secretary look into what can be done to ensure that appropriate treatment and support pathways are available to individuals with acquired brain injuries?

**Alex Neil:** As I mentioned previously, the national managed clinical network for ABI works to promote consistency of treatment across Scotland and to improve the quality of services for children and adults with ABI. In 2009, the network published its standards for traumatic brain injuries in adults, which cover a number of areas and are available on the network's website. I am happy to provide the member with the details on that.

Although the standards were developed for TBI, many of the recommendations are equally applicable to ABI. The network is exploring the potential to evolve into a managed care network that will help to support and recognise the long-term social care needs of people with ABI. I understand that that work is in its early stages and will take time. However, it is envisaged that the network will include developing pathways between health and social care to deal with the very issues that Mark McDonald has rightly highlighted. That work will be helped by the recently published Scottish intercollegiate guidelines network—SIGN—guideline 130 on brain injury rehabilitation in adults.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife)**

**(Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for that comprehensive answer on the issue of brain injuries.

One form of brain injury is alcohol-related brain damage. There was a specialist working group on that particular area, in which there is intensive and increasing national health service demand. Can the cabinet secretary say whether there has been progress on that group's recommendations, or can he provide a report on the matter to Parliament at a later date, as the area is important?

**Alex Neil:** The group's work is fairly detailed, so perhaps it would be best if I wrote to Dr Simpson and placed a copy of the letter in the Scottish Parliament information centre so that every member has access to it.

#### **Access to Green Space (Health Benefits)**

**4. Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has made of the health benefits of access to green space. (S4O-01928)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** The Scottish Government funded the green health project to look at the health benefits of access to green space, building on the existing evidence base. That project found that more green space in urban neighbourhoods is associated with a lower risk of mortality among Scotland's poorest men. In respect of middle-aged Scots who were not in work and lived in the most deprived urban areas, the research found healthier levels of the stress hormone cortisol among those who had more green space in their neighbourhoods compared with those who had less. Furthermore, the project found that Scots who use green spaces for physical activity have a lower risk of poor mental health than those who use non-natural environments, such as the gym and streets.

**Clare Adamson:** I draw the minister's attention to the pioneering work in Forth Valley royal hospital, which is in my region. A local partnership that works in the surrounding woodlands there has created a green oasis for patients, which aids their recuperation and levels of stress. That oasis is available for staff, visitors and the local community. Will the minister ensure that that good practice is shared across the national health service estate?

**Michael Matheson:** I am very aware of that project, as Forth Valley royal hospital is in my constituency. The hospital site is fairly unique, as it is on the old Royal Scottish national hospital site and it has an extensive woodland and grassland area associated with it. The hospital has made good use of that for the benefit of patients and relatives.

We have taken forward a number of pieces of work in the area at the national level through the green exercise partnership, which involves the Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and NHS Health Scotland, to look at what further programmes could be used to improve NHS healthcare in green space settings. That partnership is working with eight area health boards in Scotland to support them in collaborating on how they can improve the use of green spaces in local hospital areas.

There is a lot of evidence that shows that benefits can be gained from social prescribing, through general practitioner practices referring patients on to different activities that are based in green spaces. That is a way in which primary care can help with the effective use of local green spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing.

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Question 5, which was lodged by Dave Thompson, has been withdrawn for understandable reasons.

#### **Dentists (NHS Orkney)**

**6. Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government how many adults in the NHS Orkney area are on a waiting list to be registered with a national health service dentist. (S4O-01930)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Responsibility for the overall provision of NHS general dental services in the area rests with NHS Orkney. As at 14 March 2013, 1,093 adults were waiting to register with an NHS dentist in the NHS Orkney area.

**Liam McArthur:** I thank the minister for his engagement on the issue over a number of months, and I certainly welcome the progress that has been made over recent times, but I am sure that the minister will acknowledge that adult registrations with an NHS dentist and participation rates in Orkney remain far below the national average. Therefore, I urge him to look at what specific steps could be taken to ensure that adults in my constituency enjoy the same access to NHS dental treatment that others across Scotland enjoy.

**Michael Matheson:** We have had a considerable level of contact on the issue over the past year or so, and it is fair to say that, as Liam McArthur recognises, NHS Orkney has made significant progress in the area. As I mentioned, 1,093 adults are waiting to register with an NHS dentist in the NHS Orkney area. In July 2012, the figure was 2,120, so there has been almost a 50 per cent reduction over a relatively short period of time.

However, I recognise that further progress needs to be made. I understand that NHS Orkney has two permanent dental officer posts that are vacant, for which it is about to advertise. It also has a temporary post that is vacant, into which it hopes to recruit someone.

In addition, I have asked the chief dental officer to maintain contact with NHS Orkney to ensure that it is getting the right support and advice to allow it to continue to make progress. The most recent report that I had from the chief dental officer was that the board was confident that it was

moving in the right direction and that, should it require any further support from central Government, it would request that. I have asked the board to keep us informed of progress so that we see the improvements that have been made in the NHS Orkney area continuing to be made.

**The Presiding Officer:** Question 7, in the name of Helen Eadie, has been withdrawn. Ms Eadie is representing the Parliament on other business.

Question 8, in the name of David Torrance, has not been lodged, for perfectly understandable reasons.

### Psychological Therapies

**9. Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to encourage the use of so-called talking therapies across the national health service. (S4O-01933)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** The Scottish Government has established the health improvement, efficiency and governance, access and treatment target to

“Deliver faster access to mental health services by delivering 18 weeks referral to treatment for Psychological therapies from December 2014”.

Since the HEAT target was set, we have already made improvements in service performance across Scotland. The target is acting as a driver for service improvement.

We have published “The Matrix: A Guide to Delivering Evidence-based Psychological Therapies in Scotland”, which gives guidance on what treatments are effective for which conditions. It also stresses that services must provide adequate supervision for staff who deliver psychological interventions, to ensure patient safety and the delivery of evidence-based care. Through NHS Education for Scotland, we are working to assess and develop workforce capacity to ensure that a range of staff are equipped to deliver such therapies.

**Roderick Campbell:** I welcome the role that psychological therapy plays in the Scottish Government’s mental health strategy for 2012 to 2015. However, does the minister accept that less than 1 per cent of elderly patients with depression are referred to psychological services and that, more often than not, such patients are prescribed medication? What steps can the Scottish Government take to improve those figures?

**Michael Matheson:** The member raises an extremely important point. More than any other group, older people are less likely to have mental illness diagnosed and less likely to receive treatment, although some prescribing data suggests that the situation is improving.

Delivery of the psychological therapies HEAT target applies to older people in the same way that it applies to the rest of the population, and we will monitor progress on that. In addition, we established a working group to focus on the psychological needs of older people. The group identified the need to improve access to services across the whole of the mental health system. We are working with NHS boards and other partners to take forward the group’s recommendations and to develop outcome measures that are related to older people’s mental health.

Some local authorities are taking forward such work through service redesign under the change fund, and NHS Education for Scotland is delivering training to NHS staff on psychological interventions for older people. That work includes the training of a cohort of older people cognitive behavioural therapists.

A range of measures are being taken, which I believe can help us to improve the way in which services are delivered to older people with a mental illness. We will monitor that as we move towards achieving the HEAT target in December 2014.

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** The minister knows that the issue of psychological therapies for older people was discussed at the last but one meeting of the cross-party group on mental health, but has he heard that, at the group’s most recent meeting, we were presented with quite a lot of evidence about the range of psychological therapies that could be beneficial for a variety of people of different ages across Scotland? In particular, does he understand the concern that was expressed that, for many NHS boards, psychological therapies are identified with cognitive behavioural therapy? Useful as that therapy is, can he do anything to extend the range of therapies that are available, because we were told that there is a sound evidence base for a wide range of humanistic psychotherapies and counselling?

**Michael Matheson:** I recognise the issue that the member raises. It is why we published “The Matrix”, which presents a range of psychological therapies and sets out where they can best be applied. It is extremely important that any psychological therapies that are made available in the NHS in Scotland have a good evidence base. We are always open to considering other therapies that can be provided, where there is a good evidence base and if they can be included in “The Matrix”. That was considered prior to the publication of “The Matrix” last year.

It is important that we ensure that people can access services in a way that best suits them. That is why, in delivering the services, local authorities and health boards must work in



partnership to design services that allow older people to access those services as and when appropriate.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I recognise the constraints on the Government relating to the workforce for talking therapies. I also recognise the progress that the Government has made and its aspirations. The Government is trying to achieve the 18-week target by December 2014, but I draw to its attention the fact that a constituent of mine who has recently been referred to psychological services in Tayside has been told that they will wait three years. As the implementation date for the 18-week target approaches, I hope that the Government will consider existing waiting lists and ensure that individuals do not wait for an extended period but benefit from the Government's aspirations to ensure an 18-week waiting time.

**Michael Matheson:** The waiting time for the member's constituent is unacceptable. The target has been brought in to deal with such issues and to drive improvement. It is worth noting that, as I understand it, the target is the only one of its nature in the world for access to psychological therapies. It is ambitious, but we need to have a target that helps to improve the way in which services are delivered, drive up standards and speed up access to therapies.

Some of the work that we are doing is to ensure that boards record information consistently, because the reality is that some boards have not been recording the information. We need to ensure that we have good-quality data so that we have confidence in the progress that boards are making. We can then publish the data so that people can make an informed judgment about how boards are performing. The target is ambitious, but it can help to improve the way in which the services are delivered overall.

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** The minister will understand the value of speech and communication services for children and families, particularly in nursery, where they provide a great socioeconomic advantage. Does he therefore share my disappointment that the Labour and Tory administration in Stirling Council has recently withdrawn the services of an organisation called CHAT—the communication help and awareness team—which is having a significant impact on my constituents?

**Michael Matheson:** I am aware that some communication skills services, such as speech therapy, if provided at an early age, can address communication disorders that can become more difficult in later life, which can lead to a range of issues. That type of early intervention is crucial in tackling some of the issues much more effectively. It is important that all local authorities consider

taking a much more preventative approach on the issues. The best way in which local authorities can achieve that is through early intervention. They should seek to support services to allow that to happen effectively in their areas.

### Neurological Conditions

**10. Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to improve services for people with neurological conditions and their carers. (S4O-01934)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** We are committed to ensuring that everyone with a neurological condition is able to access the care and support that they need, including support for their families and carers. The national neurological advisory group, which was established with Scottish Government funding to support implementation of the clinical standards for neurological conditions, has reported that all national health service boards now have improvement plans and improvement leads in place and are providing reports on progress. Prior to that, the Scottish Government provided NHS boards with funding of around £1.2 million over two years to assist them in developing local neurological improvement networks.

**Mary Fee:** People with neurological conditions are often at the mercy of a postcode lottery. What steps is the Government taking to tackle that postcode lottery in care for people with neurological conditions?

**Michael Matheson:** As I mentioned in my response, the national neurological advisory group was established to help to support the implementation of the clinical standards, which should help to address some of the inconsistencies that Mary Fee has recognised. That is why each board was asked to produce an improvement plan and to put in place improvement leads who can allow that to happen in a consistent way. I recognise that there will continue to be some inconsistencies in how boards take such matters forward, but we now have the infrastructure in place to assist us in ensuring that there is much more consistency. Some of the feedback that I have heard from some organisations is that they are starting to see some improvements as a result of that, but I recognise that further progress needs to be made and I will be keen to see that progress continuing.

### Independent Living Fund

**11. Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will launch its consultation on the use and administration of the resource that it will receive as a result of the United Kingdom Government's decision to close the independent living fund in 2015. (S4O-01935)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** This spring, the Scottish Government will launch a consultation on the future use of the resources that will be devolved following Westminster's decision to close the independent living fund.

**Ken Macintosh:** Will the minister indicate his thinking at this stage on the Scottish Government's intention for the fund and on the consultation questions, including on whether the fund will be open to new applicants? If he is not able to answer that question, will he at least give us the fundamental assurance that the consultation will start from the premise that no current recipient of the ILF will be disadvantaged—in other words, no one who currently receives ILF will lose it?

**Michael Matheson:** The member is inviting me to give a commitment on the basis of information that I do not yet have from the Westminster Government on exactly what level of resource will be devolved to the Scottish Government. Once we have some of that information, we will be in a better place to be able to take forward what may be the appropriate measures here in Scotland.

I recognise that many disability organisations were extremely disappointed by the way in which the UK Government conducted the consultation on its decision to close the independent living fund. I can give a commitment to Parliament that we will have a genuine consultation that will seek people's views on what might be the best approach in Scotland. However, that will be largely dependent on the level of resource that is devolved to the Scottish Government by the UK Government. As yet, we do not have that detail confirmed.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** As the minister will know, all Scottish National Party MSPs deplore the changes being imposed by the UK Government. Is it not the case, though, that, three days before the 2010 general election, the then UK Labour Government brought in changes to the qualifying criteria such that, when they were implemented, of the 3,660 people in Scotland who received ILF, only 16 would have qualified if they had reapplied? Therefore, was not one of the last actions of the Labour Government, in effect, to close the ILF to new applicants?

**Michael Matheson:** I know that, over several years, the ILF has been subject to a number of changes, which started with the previous Government and continued with the existing Government. We are in a situation in which the UK Government has decided that it wishes to bring the independent living fund to an end. I recognise that that causes uncertainty and anxiety for those who are currently recipients of the fund.

I am keen to take forward in a genuine, open and transparent way a consultation with stakeholders that can allow them to express their views on what future plans we can take forward here in Scotland. However, I again issue a note of caution, in that we are not aware of the exact level of finance that will be devolved by the UK Government to the Scottish Government. That will have a significant bearing on any future plans that we have here in Scotland, but there is a willingness on the part of the Scottish Government to engage with stakeholders in a genuine way to allow them to express their views on what the future shape of any service should be like in Scotland.

**The Presiding Officer:** Question 12, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, has been withdrawn.

### Liverpool Care Pathway

**13. Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on how national health service boards apply the Liverpool care pathway. (S4O-01937)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The Scottish Government's position is that any organisation caring for dying people should be able to demonstrate best practice in care of the dying. The Liverpool care pathway is recognised as one pathway that national health service boards can use to support high-quality end-of-life care. The responsibility for use and monitoring of the Liverpool care pathway lies with the organisation using it. The use of the Liverpool care pathway should be part of a continuous quality improvement programme within an organisation's governance structure and must be supported by a robust education and training programme.

**Michael McMahon:** The cabinet secretary will be aware of recent press reports that have painted a negative picture of the Liverpool care pathway. It is always concerning when families are left upset following the loss of a loved one and when the care that they receive is considered to have been unsatisfactory, but would the cabinet secretary agree that the application of the Liverpool care pathway has a good record overall and that it is being used as a positive care package in end-of-life situations? Will the cabinet secretary therefore commit to working with practitioners in the hospice and palliative care sector to promote the LCP, and to support public education on what the LCP can provide in order to overcome the negative perceptions that might have been promoted by some in the media?

**Alex Neil:** I wholly agree with the sentiments that have been expressed by Michael McMahon. I am prepared to work with all the relevant

stakeholders to ensure that the reputation of the Liverpool care pathway is enhanced, which it should be.

From time to time, obviously there will be levels of dissatisfaction among patients, their carers and their family with particular issues. I draw the Parliament's attention to the Patient Opinion website, which I launched yesterday, through which any patient, carer, family member or visitor will be able to record any concerns, which can immediately be brought to the attention of ministers. We are administering the website in relation to both the Liverpool care pathway and any matter that people are concerned about with regard to service provision in the national health service.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I appreciate the cabinet secretary's response to Michael McMahon. As he will recall, I wrote to him in November last year, asking what discussions he has had with the Department of Health in relation to its inquiry into the Liverpool care pathway. Will he take this opportunity to inform members of what progress has been made in explaining to the wider public the benefits of that form of palliative care? Does he agree with me that the term "Liverpool care pathway" is no longer helpful, given the misguided connections that it now has, as referred to by Michael McMahon?

**Alex Neil:** Both north and south of the border, this is very much work in progress. We recognise that there is a major education and training programme to be undertaken, and part of that is about communicating with the public, patients, carers and families.

I know of some incidents. Indeed, there was a case recently, which was highlighted by the cross-party group on palliative care, in which a patient was having Liverpool care pathway treatment administered, and the family expressed a number of concerns primarily around the lack of proper communication with them, as they perceived it. I do not think that there is a silver bullet here, and education and training continue to be required at all levels. It is undoubtedly the job of all of us to reassure people that the Liverpool care pathway, properly administered, is a very acceptable pathway in the circumstances.

#### **Scottish Ambulance Service (Caithness)**

**14. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action the Scottish Ambulance Service takes to meet patients' travel and emergency needs in Caithness. (S4O-01938)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The Scottish Ambulance Service is responsible for providing the patients of

Caithness and all other parts of Scotland with high-quality, safe, effective and compassionate care. It is responsible for the delivery of the 999 emergency ambulance service, the air ambulance service and the non-emergency patient transport service for those patients who have a medical or mobility need for the support of an ambulance crew to access their healthcare appointment.

I expect the Scottish Ambulance Service to work in partnership with the communities that it supports to ensure that it meets their needs in a way that is underpinned by the NHS Scotland healthcare quality strategy.

**Rob Gibson:** Could the minister provide a comparison of the costs of patient transport between Caithness and Raigmore hospital in Inverness with those of providing more services in Caithness general hospital in Wick and the Dunbar hospital in Thurso?

**Alex Neil:** I would be more than happy to provide that information and to have a meeting with Mr Gibson to discuss the various issues. I draw members' attention to a very comparable situation in Inverness, which I saw for myself last week. A mental health consultation was held from Raigmore hospital, where the mental health consultant was, with a patient who was a resident of a care home in Ballachulish. That is a very good example of where telecare services can be extremely helpful. We have given high priority to the development of telecare services, particularly in the Highlands, Grampian and Islands, where it can make transport unnecessary without in any way diminishing the quality of care; indeed, it can improve it.

One of the points made to me by that patient and their carers and family was that the fact that they did not need to make a five-hour trip between Ballachulish and Inverness was a major benefit to the patient and meant that the extreme stress of the journey was avoided. I am more than happy to have a discussion with Mr Gibson about such issues around Caithness.

#### **Queen's Baton Relay**

**15. Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when the Scotland route of the Queen's baton relay will be announced. (S4O-01939)

**The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison):** On Commonwealth day, 11 March this year, the route that the Queen's baton relay will take around the Commonwealth was announced. When the baton arrives in Scotland in mid-June next year, it will spend 40 days travelling around every part of Scotland, visiting every local authority area. The relay will

finish at the Commonwealth games opening ceremony in Glasgow on 23 July.

The Glasgow 2014 organising committee is working with the Scottish Government, local authorities and others to develop the route that the Queen's baton relay will take as it travels around Scotland. That route will be announced in October this year.

As the baton travels around the country, it will provide a fantastic opportunity for people in communities across the whole of Scotland to take part in celebrating the games.

**Fiona McLeod:** Will local people be prioritised to carry the baton in their home town? Will there be any costs to the participants? My questions arise from constituents' experiences as Olympic torch bearers, which left some of them out of pocket and others many miles from home. They still enjoyed the experience but I hope that we can learn from it.

**Shona Robison:** We have been working hard to learn the lessons of the Olympic torch relay. For the Queen's baton relay, the organising committee has committed as far as is operationally possible to enabling baton bearers to run in their local area. No fees are associated with being a baton bearer, and those who are fortunate enough to be selected will have a tremendous opportunity to contribute towards a great spectacle and the excitement of the games coming to Scotland.

#### **Healthcare (Remote and Rural Areas)**

**16. Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made since 2007 on delivering healthcare to rural and remote areas. (S4O-01940)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The remote and rural implementation group that oversaw the implementation of the Scottish Government's report "Delivering for Remote and Rural Healthcare" was disbanded in 2010. Its final report confirms that 63 recommendations were delivered. The north of Scotland planning group continues to provide support to delivering sustainable remote and rural healthcare in that part of Scotland.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that, given the progress that has been made in delivering better health services across rural Scotland, this Parliament is best placed to meet the needs of rural and remote Scotland across all policy areas?

**Alex Neil:** I could not agree more. Indeed, having listened to the budget before I came in here, I am even more firm in my view that it would

be far better for Scotland to have full control over all aspects of the governance of Scotland.

**The Presiding Officer:** We can take question 17 if everyone is brief.

#### **NHS Lanarkshire (Meetings)**

**17. John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met the chief executive of NHS Lanarkshire and what issues were discussed. (S4O-01941)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** Ministers and Government officials regularly meet national health service boards, including NHS Lanarkshire, and a range of matters of importance to local people are discussed.

**John Wilson:** It has been brought to my attention that some of my constituents face the inconvenience of having to travel to a centralised X-ray service at Monklands hospital instead of being able to use the service that was previously provided at Coatbridge and Cumbernauld health centres. What impact has the centralisation of X-ray services at Monklands hospital had on patient attendance at Monklands hospital X-ray department? Is Monklands hospital able to cope with the demand made by centralising the service?

**Alex Neil:** I am aware of the issue that my colleague has raised. He and Jamie Hepburn have raised it on a number of occasions. I am monitoring the situation closely to make sure that the capacity at Monklands is satisfactory, that it can cover Coatbridge and Cumbernauld and that the quality of the service is in no way diminished as a result of its relocation last year.

## Trident

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-05988, in the name of Keith Brown, on Trident.

14:40

**The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown):** In December 1962, the Polaris sales agreement between the United States and United Kingdom Governments was announced. As a result of that agreement, which was forged in the cold war and amended in 1982 for Trident, nuclear weapons have been based on the Clyde for 45 years. The Scottish Government has called this debate because before us is an opportunity to break away from that cold war mentality and to bring new momentum to the cause of nuclear disarmament. In my view, it is the responsibility of every member in the chamber to play a positive role in supporting that aim.

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** Will the minister give way?

**Keith Brown:** If the member will let me get started, I am sure that I will take his intervention later.

Some will say that we should not be holding this debate and that such matters are for Westminster. I find that argument extremely odd, given the fact that Scotland hosts all the UK's nuclear weapons. Scotland is uniquely placed to debate the issue; although, as a country, we are consistent in our opposition to nuclear weapons and although the values of peace and social justice are part of our national identity, the UK's entire nuclear fleet is, as I have said, armed in and operates from Scottish waters. I therefore make no apology for saying that although powers over this might currently sit elsewhere, we can ensure that Scotland's democratic voice on the most vital of issues is heard.

I will seek to set out the Government's case for withdrawing Trident and try to make clear our commitment to nuclear disarmament and to our vision of a Scotland free of the presence and threat of nuclear weapons.

**Willie Rennie:** Will the minister give way now?

**Keith Brown:** Yes.

**Willie Rennie:** I respect the position of the minister and the Government on unilateral nuclear disarmament. However, is he able to tell me whether, if Scotland goes independent, there will be fewer nuclear weapons in the UK and the world?

**Keith Brown:** For the benefit of Mr Rennie's education, I point out that the Scottish National

Party's whole *raison d'être* is self-determination. It is for individual countries to take their own view on nuclear weapons but we believe that we can set a lead by eliminating such weapons from our country. That is our role.

We will get the chance later to hear from Bill Kidd, who I believe was the only UK parliamentarian to attend earlier this month a major international conference in Oslo on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. He and others will wish to make their own points, but I feel that in debating these issues we must never lose sight of the truly devastating consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. We must be absolutely clear that these are weapons of mass destruction; they are indiscriminate and kill and destroy without grace or favour; and they devastate not just all military targets in their path but all civilians including children, all schools and hospitals, and all livestock and crops.

On this point, at least, I agree with the former UK Secretary of State for Defence Des Browne who, writing in *The Telegraph* on 5 February, said that

"large-scale use of nuclear weapons ... would be suicidal"

and that

"even a small-scale nuclear exchange ... would affect at least a billion people and usher in colder temperatures than at any time in the past millennium."

I also highlight the February 2013 report from the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament entitled "If Britain fired Trident—The humanitarian consequences of a nuclear attack by a Trident submarine on Moscow", which sets out in horrifying detail the devastating humanitarian consequences of a nuclear attack on a large urban area—precisely the type of attack that Trident is designed to deliver. I note in passing that the Conservative amendment seeks to delete any reference in the motion to the devastating impact of nuclear weapons. It is clear that a nuclear attack would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences.

There is also an economic case to make in this argument. I have talked about the human cost of nuclear weapons, which is clearly far and away the most important factor, but there is also an unacceptable financial cost. The UK Government keeps the accounting on Trident confidential, but estimates suggest that running costs amount to around £2 billion per annum, with Scotland's share estimated at around £163 million per annum or almost £500,000 each and every day. Furthermore, the UK Government's plan to replace the current Trident fleet is projected to cost around £20 billion to build, with costs running to more than £100 billion over its lifetime. Although it is not due to decide on the plan until 2016, the Ministry of

Defence estimates that it will spend around £3 billion for and in advance of that decision. Frankly, it is staggering that the UK Government is preparing to spend massive sums on nuclear weapons while at the same time cutting conventional defence forces and slashing social welfare budgets.

That is not just the view of the Scottish Government. On 22 January this year, Professor Malcolm Chalmers of the Royal United Services Institute said:

“sharp increases in spending on Trident renewal in the early 2020s seem set to mean further years of austerity for conventional equipment plans.”

**Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** Does the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth speak for the Scottish Government? He suggests in his Swinneyleaks document:

“I have made clear to the Defence Workstream that a much lower budget must be assumed.”

He is planning to cut defence spending in an independent Scotland.

**Keith Brown:** The point that the finance secretary has made is that around £2 billion is currently spent on defence in Scotland and we pay around £3.3 billion, so we could much more effectively finance conventional defence.

Former UK military leaders agree. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, General Lord Ramsbotham, General Sir Hugh Beach and Major-General Patrick Cordingley, writing in *The Times* in April last year, said:

“It may well be that money spent on new nuclear weapons will be money that is not available to support our frontline troops, or for crucial counterterrorism work; money not available for buying helicopters, armoured vehicles, frigates or even for paying for more manpower.”

We have seen that in spades with the recent basing review announced by the coalition Government. Even more clearly, in March 2012 the liberal think tank Centreforum said:

“Replacing Trident is nonsensical. There is no current or medium-term threat to the UK which justifies the huge costs involved.”

It is clear that the continuation of Trident comes at the cost of conventional defence jobs and cuts elsewhere.

Of course, there are those who will still say that the benefits of nuclear weapons to our national security are a price worth paying. I do not accept that argument and I never have. The presence of nuclear weapons has not prevented conflicts between nuclear and non-nuclear states. Indeed, recent developments in North Korea suggest that the risk of further countries developing nuclear

weapons and potentially using them remains very much alive.

Also, at no point have I seen—nor would I expect to see—a conceivable scenario in which the UK would use its nuclear weapons. I would be interested to hear whether, during the debate, any of the Opposition parties can come up with a scenario in which we would use nuclear weapons.

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** Having listened to the minister's impassioned delivery, I ask him to explain whether he understands what is meant by a deterrent. It is difficult to prove a negative, but does he concede any merit in the concept of deterrence?

**Keith Brown:** I understand that Annabel Goldie will not take my word for it that nuclear weapons provide no deterrent whatever, but I have just quoted a number of senior military people and I will quote some other figures—on her side in fact. Michael Portillo, a Conservative ex-Secretary of State for Defence, is a good example. He believes that nuclear weapons serve no purpose whatever. Perhaps the member will take their word for it that the weapons serve no strategic purpose whatever, least of all deterrence.

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** What deterrent were nuclear weapons to General Galtieri when he decided to invade the Falkland Islands?

**Keith Brown:** None whatever.

General Sir Mike Jackson has recently said that there is no possibility that the UK would be able to retake the Falkland Islands. It no longer has the conventional power to do that, not least because of the money that it spends on nuclear weapons instead.

The argument that Trident secures a seat at the top table does not convince either. Economic strength and the capacity to provide aid and conventional support for international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations are far more powerful and positive levers.

Scotland has consistently opposed nuclear weapons. A majority of public opinion, our churches, the Scottish Trades Union Congress and wider civic society oppose Trident. Of particular importance to the Scottish Government is therefore the basing of Trident at Her Majesty's naval base Clyde. Our opposition there is twofold. First, we are opposed to the possession of nuclear weapons wherever they are held. Secondly, but just as important, we object to nuclear weapons being based here against the will of the majority of the Scottish people.

We also object strenuously to the UK Government's Trident replacement plans, which, if approved by the UK Government in 2016, will see

nuclear weapons based on the Clyde beyond the middle of this century. Going further, we have made clear our intention to advocate that a written constitution for an independent Scotland should include a constitutional ban on nuclear weapons ever being based here in future.

We are also absolutely committed to pursuing the safe and speedy withdrawal of Trident following independence. It is for those reasons that we ask the Parliament, through this debate, to call on the United Kingdom Government to acknowledge Scotland's opposition to Trident and to develop options for its withdrawal.

**Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I am no great fan of Trident, but will the minister explain what evidence he has that the majority of the Scottish population is against nuclear weapons?

**Keith Brown:** I could happily spend the rest of the speech giving the member evidence on that, but most recently a poll carried out last week showed that 80 per cent of people in Scotland—both from the yes and the no independence campaigns—are against Trident.

It is the duty of any Government to protect the best interests of its people, and there are those who claim that our commitment to remove Trident from Scotland is simply nimbyism. However, the wellbeing of all people in Scotland is in Scotland's interest, and that is why I believe that the Scottish Government should play a part in supporting disarmament around the globe. How much more moral authority do we have in convincing others to get rid of their weapons if we have done it first?

It is our vision for an independent Scotland to advocate for nuclear disarmament as an equal partner in the international community, and to add our voice and efforts to the growing number of nations calling for action on the reduction of such weapons. It is worth bearing in mind the fact that the UK Government is signed up to the non-proliferation treaty and United Nations charters that call for everyone to work towards disarmament in relation to nuclear weapons.

We also believe—*[Interruption.]* The Conservatives say, “Yes,” but they have given a cast-iron commitment to continue with Trident. The two things are not compatible.

We also believe that, under the current constitutional arrangements and recognising clear public opinion on the matter, which I have just cited in response to Jenny Marra, the Scottish Parliament has an obligation and an opportunity to make its position clear.

The international community has signalled its commitment to nuclear disarmament through mechanisms such as the nuclear non-proliferation

treaty. However, to take the NPT further, we believe that a positive and fitting step would be to place on record our support for the five-point plan on nuclear disarmament of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. That plan calls on all NPT parties, and in particular the nuclear weapon states, to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament. It calls on the permanent members of the UN Security Council to commence discussions on security issues and the nuclear disarmament process, and for all parties to pursue new efforts to bring the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty into force.

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** Will the minister give way?

**Keith Brown:** I cannot. I have taken a number of interventions and I would like to try and finish in the short time that is left.

Nuclear weapon states should also provide greater transparency and accountability in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and all parties are called upon to pursue complementary measures for the elimination of other types of WMDs and new efforts to combat WMD terrorism.

In conclusion, the Scottish Government believes that Trident nuclear weapons are unsustainable morally, economically and strategically; that their replacement and continued basing at Her Majesty's naval base Clyde would be contrary to the clearly held view of the Scottish people; and that the Parliament has a clear and positive role to play in support of global nuclear disarmament.

I have one further point in response to Jenny Marra. The Parliament has voted against Trident; that was the express view of the Parliament in 2007 and subsequently.

The Parliament has a clear and positive role to play in support of these ends. For those reasons, I am happy to support the motion in the Government's name and I advocate the removal of Trident from our shores on behalf of the people of Scotland.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges the devastating humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons; endorses the Secretary-General of the United Nations's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament; calls on the UK Government to acknowledge the opposition of the Scottish Parliament to nuclear weapons and to the presence of Trident in Scotland, and further calls on the UK Government to explore options for the removal of Trident ahead of the so-called main gate decision in 2016.

14:53

**Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** The question is why anyone would rise to advocate the retention or replacement of a nuclear weapons system or platform. The SNP would have you believe that

only the immoral, the trigger-happy, the war-crazed, the Dr Strangelove-esque, intent on destruction, would do so, but that is a false depiction, for I support the retention of Trident and my party supports the retention of Trident because we are a party of responsibility.

The first responsibility of any Government is the defence and the security of its people. Further, I believe that it is the responsibility of individual countries to work for security and stability around the globe. Continuous at-sea deterrence has been the ultimate safeguard of the nation since 1968. The UK's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance and our commitment and progress as a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty mark us out as a responsible global citizen.

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** The member talks about global responsibility. Does she feel that the 180 or so countries in the world that do not possess nuclear weapons are acting irresponsibly?

**Ruth Davidson:** I think that the UK is the only recognised nuclear power under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty that has a single platform for weapons and a single set of warheads, and which has managed to reduce its number of warheads in the past 13 years. The fact that it has set out clear principles not to threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries shows that it is a country of responsibility. Now, we must look at non-nuclear countries that are becoming nuclear threats. There are a number of countries that were not nuclear powers when the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was started but which have gone on to become nuclear powers—they are countries of irresponsibility.

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** No, thank you; I was dealing with the member's colleague.

In the assertions and emotion that have come from the SNP on the issue of nuclear weapons down the years there has been a distinct lack of facts, so I would like to introduce some. Why do we have nuclear weapons in this country? In what circumstances could they be deployed? What work is going on to reduce nuclear capability in the UK and across the wider world?

SNP members are correct that in terms of pure destructive power, nuclear weapons pose a uniquely terrible threat. It is precisely because of that threat that they have a capability to deter acts of aggression that is on a different scale to any other form of deterrence.

A number of enduring principles underpin the UK's approach to nuclear deterrence. The first is the focus on preventing nuclear attack. The UK's nuclear weapons are designed not for military use during conflict, but instead to deter and prevent nuclear blackmail and acts of aggression against our vital interests that cannot be countered by other means. The notice to fire the Trident D5 missiles has been increased to several days since the cold war ended, and the missiles are not targeted at any country.

Secondly, the UK will retain only the minimum amount of destructive power required to achieve its deterrence objectives. Since 1997, the UK Government has reduced the upper limit on operationally available nuclear warheads by nearly half. That reduction is continuing, with a commitment to reduce the number still further into the mid-2020s.

**Mark McDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** Not at this time.

The third key principle is that the UK's nuclear deterrent supports collective security through NATO for the Euro-Atlantic area. Nuclear deterrence plays an important part in NATO's overall defensive strategy, and the UK's nuclear forces make a substantial contribution to that.

Our nuclear defences are designed to keep our country and the countries that we are allied to safer in an unstable world. I cannot predict the future threats to our nation over the next 50 years, and neither can SNP members. Members on all sides of this chamber would wish to see a nuclear weapon-free world and I believe that all parties are committed to multilateral disarmament. The SNP has not explained how unilateral disarmament—or, indeed, just kicking Trident down the road to England—would help to achieve that aim. There is no evidence that others would follow the UK down a unilateralist route. There would need to be compelling evidence that a nuclear threat to the UK's vital interests would not re-emerge in future before we could responsibly contemplate such a move. We cannot mortgage our long-term national security against such assumptions.

The UK takes its international responsibilities seriously. As well as reducing the upper limit of operationally available nuclear warheads, Britain is the only nuclear weapon state recognised under the NPT to have a single platform, single delivery system and single warheads. Britain has significantly reduced not just the scale but also the readiness of its nuclear system. HM Government's transparency regarding its arsenal and its declaratory policy regarding its use are designed to foster trust among states and to help encourage other states to reduce nuclear weapons as we have done.



**Mark McDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** I will give way in a second.

The SNP's approach to this most serious of subjects, however, is muddled, confused, cynical and posturing. After decades of opposition, the SNP says it wants an independent Scotland to shelter under the security umbrella of a nuclear NATO alliance, while disrupting the very capability of that umbrella.

For me, Sandra White explained the contradiction best when she said:

"It's not enough to say that you believe in independence and then say that you want to belong to Nato. As far as I'm concerned, it's hypocritical to say we shouldn't have nuclear weapons and we want to belong to Nato—how dare we".

**Keith Brown:** Does the member not believe that the real hypocrisy lies in saying that we are responsible enough to have nuclear weapons and other countries are not? Will she also acknowledge the fact that we have not said that we want to shelter under anybody's nuclear umbrella? We want the world to be rid of nuclear weapons—that is an entirely consistent position.

**Ruth Davidson:** We want to be rid of nuclear weapons too, and that is why we are using the leverage that we have by reducing our own stockpile to work with other countries around the world to do that. The SNP has given us no evidence that unilateral disarmament or kicking Trident down the road will achieve that.

As yesterday's debate was a cynical attempt to use a 10-year-old conflict for naked politicking on a referendum for independence, so is today's. The SNP appears to want it both ways—anti-nuclear today but in a pro-nuclear alliance tomorrow. Why is the SNP's defence spokesman now championing NATO? Is it because of a commitment to the UK's allies or because he believes in international co-operation to keep Europe safe? No, it is to win the referendum. At the SNP conference in October, Angus Robertson said:

"Do not disregard the evidence; when asked, 75% of respondents said they would wish an Independent Scotland to remain ... you can boo, but do not disregard the evidence. ... Walking away from our neighbours and allies will not help us win a referendum in 2014."

The rest of us support NATO because we believe in standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies to secure the safety and security of the modern world; the SNP supports NATO to huckle votes to break up Britain.

**Mark McDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** No thank you, not at this time.

The other argument that we hear is the money argument, which is that Trident is expensive and the money could be better spent elsewhere. We can quibble about the sums, but the yes Scotland campaign put a notice on its website last week saying that Scotland's share of Trident is £163 million a year—a figure repeated by the minister. Trident supports more than 6,500 jobs in Faslane, which makes it the biggest single-site employer in the whole of Scotland. In the coming years, that is due to rise to more than 8,000 jobs, as the rest of the submarine fleet relocates to HMNB Clyde.

For the nationalists, that £163 million a year, which supports high-quality jobs for people across the west of Scotland, could be spent better elsewhere—many times over. At conference, the First Minister suggested that the money could be put to other defence spending. In the same week, he suggested to the BBC that the money could be spent on youth unemployment and colleges. Nicola Sturgeon has suggested that it could be used for tackling child poverty. That is a change from October, when she suggested that it could be spent on welfare. The day before, she had a shopping list of nurses, teachers, schools and hospitals.

**Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** No, I want to make progress.

Angus Robertson has promoted using that same money for conflict resolution and, then, for front-line services. In June, it was to be used for infrastructure projects; in July, it was for other defence spending. By 6 March this year, he had allocated the money to tackling inequality. His Westminster colleague, Stewart Hosie, has suggested that the same £163 million should go to shovel-ready projects.

In this Parliament, the money has been earmarked by Christine Grahame and Joan McAlpine for job creation, by Alex Neil for health and education, by Christina McKelvie for nurses and teachers, by Bill Kidd for welfare, by George Adam for school building and by Kenny Gibson for further defence spending.

However, all of that is at odds with the man in charge of the money. In John Swinney's secret document, the finance secretary says that defence spending will be cut. He says:

"I have made clear to the Defence Workstream that a much lower budget must be assumed."

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** No thank you, First Minister.

However, that £163 million will not go far, because Swinneyleaks also states—

**The First Minister:** Will the member give way?

**Ruth Davidson:** No thank you, First Minister.

**The Presiding Officer:** First Minister, the member is not giving way.

**Ruth Davidson:** The £163 million will not go far, as Swinney also states that it will cost nearly four times that amount to run a Scottish tax system every year. That is a rise of more than £300 million per annum on Scotland's contribution to HM Revenue and Customs.

The debate on today's motion, like that of yesterday, is not about having a considered discussion on Scotland's future defence needs; it is a naked, cynical attempt to hijack the parliamentary timetable and rabble-rouse ahead of the referendum. We have seen, from the flip-flopping over NATO, that the nationalist's position is to harbour under a nuclear umbrella while grand-standing over attempts to dismantle that nuclear capability. We have seen, from their multiple-entry bookkeeping on the cost of Trident, that they see nuclear's defence contribution as a cash cow that they can milk in every debate. We can see, from their disregard for a considered approach to multilateral disarmament, their ignorance of the measured steps that the UK Government has taken—

**The Presiding Officer:** The member needs to wind up.

**Ruth Davidson:** And we have heard from the mouth of Angus Robertson that their position on Trident and NATO is nothing more than a vote grabber for the referendum.

The first responsibility of Government is the security of the nation. Continuous at-sea deterrence is a cornerstone of that security.

I move amendment S4M-05988.2, to leave out from "devastating" to end and insert:

"fundamental responsibility of any government to provide for the security of its citizens now and in the future and to cooperate in securing international peace and stability; recognises the uncertainty of global military threats and, therefore, the requirement to maintain an effective defence capability in the UK, including a nuclear deterrent; understands that significant foreign nuclear arsenals remain and that some are being enlarged and modernised; supports the UK Government's commitment to progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament; notes the importance of building on the non-proliferation treaty; believes that the unilateral removal of Trident would be irresponsible and negligent, and supports the UK Government's efforts to maintain stability and security for its citizens and internationally through the maintenance and renewal of Trident."

15:04

**Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (Ind):** I am sure that it has not escaped the notice of

those members in the chamber that I am the only member of the independent and Green group to speak in the debate. It is unfortunate that business has been scheduled during the PCS strike, and that it has kept my fellow group members away from the debate. Members of all parties had to cross picket lines today but the topic of Trident is so central to my support for independence that I decided to come in to speak to my amendment.

At the outset, I make it clear that I support every element of the Government's motion and applaud its decision to bring the subject to the chamber for debate. Our amendment is designed to add strength to the motion and not to replace, denigrate or contradict it. I also express my sadness, but not my surprise, at the better together campaign issuing a briefing in advance of today's debate on what they think is the positive case for Trident and attempting to score points against the Government over the issues raised in my amendment. I thought that, at least on the issue of squandering billions of pounds on unnecessary, unworkable and immoral weapons of indiscriminate slaughter, there would be some sort of consensus and serious debate, regardless of constitutional preference. However, it seems that the better together campaign is now a cold house for anti-Trident campaigners. It has alienated churches, unions, peace groups, and the majority of the people in Scotland.

It will not come as news to many in the chamber that the issue of an independent Scotland's NATO membership led me to become an independent member. I cannot support Scotland's membership of a nuclear alliance, particularly when it pressurises its members to spend a minimum of 2 per cent of their gross domestic product on defence, regardless of the geopolitical circumstances of the time. Not surprisingly, NATO expects a contribution to its military common fund from each member state. In 2011-12, that amounted to £106.7 million from the United Kingdom. That means that, even if we could secure an opt-out from any collective military efforts, we would still be contributing financially to drone attacks on civilians and other aggressive military action.

I doubt that those who rail against NATO actions in Afghanistan will make allowances for Scotland because we were not the country that pushed the button. The UK should have been outraged when two innocent young Afghanis were killed recently by NATO troops because they thought that they were terrorists. There was hardly a whisper from the UK Government.

Nuclear weapons are a stain on humanity, whether they are in Scottish waters, American bases or Russian silos. The argument of those who wish to keep Trident essentially boils down to,

"After you, I insist,"; in the Labour Party's case, if it is cheap enough, it does not seem to mind. However, a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament report entitled "Nowhere to Go" highlights the fact that there are no viable alternative bases for Trident in the UK. If we get rid of Trident from Scottish waters, it is gone for good. My concern is that the disarmament of the UK would not be in NATO's interests and that barriers will be erected against such a step.

Although Canada and Greece have removed nuclear weapons from their soil as members of NATO, I believe that those weapons had reached their sell-by date and those countries had the strategic cover of close neighbours who host nuclear weapons. The imposition of nuclear missiles on German, Belgian and Dutch soil, against the wishes of their Parliaments and citizens, should be a warning to us all about the co-operative nature of NATO.

Norway's experience with NATO should also be a lesson. Although Norway has successfully resisted the imposition of nuclear weapons on Norwegian soil, it has not succeeded in changing NATO's nuclear policy, which was reaffirmed last year at its Chicago conference. Every member of NATO is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but no significant efforts have been made to reduce the number of weapons that the alliance holds and shares. The treaty has therefore failed.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** I have a lot of sympathy with much of Jean Urquhart's amendment but will she also acknowledge that the Scottish Government has made it clear that if it comes to a choice between NATO and a nuclear-free Scotland, a nuclear-free Scotland will win every time?

**Jean Urquhart:** I accept the member's statement—of course I do. However, there is a positive alternative to NATO membership that allows Scotland to act as a responsible global citizen. There are many examples of other nations that operate outside NATO and yet are more than adequately prepared to defend themselves. Those countries are not pariahs on the world stage and are not subject to threats from abroad. Given the recent St Patrick's day celebrations in America, one would have to be very brave to claim that Ireland's non-membership of NATO has somehow resulted in its isolation or affected its ties with the world's remaining superpower. Ireland, along with a number of other non-NATO countries such as Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and much of central and eastern Europe, is a member of partnership for peace, which promotes bilateral co-operation between NATO and the partnership for peace countries on a case-by-case basis.

**The Presiding Officer:** The member needs to start winding up.

**Jean Urquhart:** Although some of those countries plan to accede to NATO, others view partnership for peace as an opportunity to co-operate internationally without compromise and without signing up to a military alliance that is predicated on a nuclear first-strike policy.

**The Presiding Officer:** You must bring your remarks to a close, Ms Urquhart.

**Jean Urquhart:** As the SNP campaign for nuclear disarmament briefing in advance of the NATO debate stated, an independent Scotland

"should not sneak timidly onto the world stage, afraid of our own shadow."

Getting rid of Trident would herald the beginning of real nuclear disarmament, as would a distinctly different Scottish defence policy.

I move amendment S4M-05988.1, to leave out from "and further" to end and insert:

"; considers membership of NATO to be a barrier to the removal of Trident, whether as part of the UK or as an independent Scotland; believes that membership of an alliance predicated on a nuclear first strike policy is as harmful to Scotland's international reputation, and poses the same threat from external agents, as the presence of a nuclear deterrent in Scottish waters; notes that European countries such as Ireland, Finland and Sweden are not members of NATO and are still considered to be full, cooperative members of the international community; further calls on the UK Government to disarm Trident and not to replace it with any other nuclear weapons system, and commits to ensuring that, in the event of independence, Trident will not be permitted to operate from Scottish waters."

15:11

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** It is customary to begin parliamentary debates by saying how pleased one is to be participating. However, I will not repeat that sentiment this afternoon. In fact, it is difficult not to be deeply sceptical about the SNP's reasons for and motivation behind calling today's debate. There are some in the SNP, as there are in Labour and other parties, whose politics have been shaped more by the cause of nuclear disarmament than by any other issue. Some might view the renewal of Trident as having such importance that it should at all times have precedence over any other pressing matters. The commitment of members such as John Finnie and Jean Urquhart is such that they were prepared to leave their party over its equivocation on the issue.

The timing of today's debate, however, seems to owe as much to the difficulties in which the SNP has found itself in recent weeks as it does to the topicality or otherwise of Trident renewal. The revelation that John Swinney and other senior

figures in the SNP are aware of the uncertainty that surrounds Scotland's finances post-independence, the recognition of the unpredictability and volatility of oil prices, and the worries over the risk that independence potentially poses to jobs and pensions are just the latest in a series of setbacks to the independence cause that have put the SNP on the defensive. That appears to be at least part of the reason why we are having an entirely spurious debate on Trident this afternoon.

**Keith Brown:** Will the member give way?

**Stuart McMillan:** Will the member give way?

**Ken Macintosh:** I will take the minister, or Stuart McMillan.

**Stuart McMillan:** Ken Macintosh talks about uncertainty. Can he provide some certainty to the Parliament and tell us who the UK would use nuclear weapons against?

**Ken Macintosh:** If a question could sum up the pointlessness of this afternoon's debate, that one from Mr McMillan would take the biscuit. I point out to Mr McMillan that this is not the only place where Scotland has representatives. I object to the line that, somehow, the members of the SNP sitting here have entire moral authority or the authority of representative democracy on the matter, when that is not the case whatsoever.

**Keith Brown** *rose—*

**Ken Macintosh:** In a minute, minister.

If I was one of the many people who have devoted their lives to campaigning to rid not just this country but the world of nuclear weapons, I would be worried that my cause was being hijacked and used to further the SNP's political ambitions. I would be concerned that today's discussion of Trident is simply a proxy for a debate on independence, rather than a debate in its own right.

Few members, if any, do not wish Britain to help rid the world of its nuclear weapons. Most of us will have given serious thought to how Scotland and Britain can set an example and take a lead on the matter, as we are conscious of the need to promote stability and lessen the chances of nuclear weapons being used in any context around the world. The United Kingdom is one of the most important signatories to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which has more signatories than any other weapons treaty and is arguably one of the most successful arms limitation and disarmament agreements in history.

By working with others, the UK has helped to make significant progress in reducing nuclear weapon stocks. Since the end of the cold war, the combined arsenals of the UK, the USA, Russia

and France have been cut by 75 per cent. The previous Labour Government reduced the number of warheads in each Trident submarine from 96 to 48 and the number of operationally available warheads from 300 to fewer than 160. At least partly as a result of such actions, my children are not growing up in the shadow of an imminent nuclear strike or facing the cold war threat that would have been familiar to some in previous generations.

**Keith Brown:** Does Ken Macintosh recognise that it is perfectly legitimate to ask whether, if people intend to spend £100 billion on something, they have some idea of the circumstances in which they would use it?

On the question of equivocation and uncertainty, can Ken Macintosh say whether he supports the replacement of the Trident nuclear missiles and whether his party leader, who is absent today, supports the establishment of a new version of Trident?

**Ken Macintosh:** The minister has introduced a new line of argument, on the cost of Trident. The interesting thing about that argument is that that is not a question of moral leadership. If we get rid of nuclear weapons because we want to make a statement, that is one thing; if we get rid of them because we cannot afford them or because we choose to spend the money on something else, that is a morally ambiguous statement. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** Members should have a little bit of courtesy, please.

**Ken Macintosh:** That sums up the ambiguity at the heart of the SNP.

The cold war may be over, but democratic accountability has yet to take root in China. Russia and America still hold large numbers of nuclear weapons, and I need hardly remind members of the developments in North Korea and Iran. Those are serious matters, and it is clear that many in this country hold strong and conflicting views on how we can best address them.

I do not claim to hold a monopoly of wisdom on nuclear disarmament, and I fully recognise that it remains an issue that provokes serious consideration and discussion in the Labour movement, but the purported unanimity of the SNP on such a heated issue, until recently at least, always struck me as slightly implausible at best. I was not surprised to see the fracturing of that brittle façade at the party's last conference.

I understand the claim, or at least the hope, of many campaigners that disarmament by Britain would give our country additional moral authority but, as the SNP has discovered, abandoning our

nuclear deterrent while hiding behind the nuclear umbrella of NATO is an altogether more ambiguous signal. I simply quote the SNP's former national secretary Duncan Ross, who said that the NATO plan

"undermines our position as a party of principle and integrity. It is fundamentally dishonest that we could join Nato and then get rid of nuclear weapons."

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I regret that you must draw to a close.

**Ken Macintosh:** This week, Johann Lamont highlighted that there are any number of debates to be heard on issues over which the Parliament has authority, including the implementation of the Leveson findings, and agreed to swap time with the SNP and bring back the issue of Trident at another time, but the SNP did not agree to that. That says everything about the SNP's motivations today.

15:18

**Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** I wish to note that I am a co-president of parliamentarians for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, which has more than 800 members from more than 80 Parliaments around the world. I am also a member of the global council of abolition 2000 and Scottish CND.

The Norwegian Government invited me to an international conference that was held in Oslo two weeks ago, whose remit was to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Some 127 Governments were represented, and there were more than 500 delegates from non-governmental organisations around the world. We heard from the Red Cross about how just one 1-megatonne bomb would create such a level of death, injury and civil damage that no country could possibly cope with it. Even countries that co-operated with one another would have difficulty in bringing any succour to those that had had that unfortunate occurrence happen to them. I said "unfortunate occurrence" but, obviously, an unfortunate occurrence is getting hit by a car when crossing the road or falling seriously ill. Somebody would have had to have dropped that 1-megatonne bomb on the country—they would have taken that choice, and they would have had that choice because they had a nuclear arsenal.

Only those countries with a nuclear arsenal present a danger to the world that this will come about. It is therefore incumbent on the countries that have these weapons to take their humanitarian impact seriously. However, the P5—the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council, all of which are nuclear weapons states—refused to take up their invitations to speak at the conference alongside the other 127

nations that deigned to speak on such a serious issue.

The pretext of the P5's refusal of these invitations was that the conference, which was addressed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, scientists, physicians and survivors of nuclear test explosions, was a distraction from the nuclear disarmament in which the P5 are engaged. For all we know, they might be engaged in it for another 50 years—after all, that is the plan for Trident. To my mind, that was just arrogant, patronising tosh.

Of course, such tosh comes from the likes of the Westminster Government, which has committed us all in the UK to £100 billion of present and future expenditure on a weapon that can never be used because it is too dangerous and threatens mass destruction and environmental devastation from which the world might never be able to recover. The P5's remarks did not go over well with a great majority of the world's nations that had attended the conference. That said, I note that, although the conference was a one-off, there was a vote for a follow-up conference, to which the P5 will again be invited to explain their position on the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons.

I have spoken at many international conferences to put forward my view that the wish of most people is for a world without nuclear weapons; I believe that the same is the case in this chamber. However, that is not going to happen simply because we wish it to happen. Someone has got to do something about it. The proposal from members on these benches is that, in an independent Scotland, there be no place for Trident or any other nuclear weapons system. That would leave Westminster having to find another home for its weapons of mass destruction. However, such a place could not be in England or Wales because, as some might be surprised to learn—although they should not be surprised, because this is well-known expert opinion—there is nowhere else for Trident to go on these islands other than where they are at the moment. In some people's minds, that means Scotland will have to remain the repository of these weapons on behalf of the UK. I do not find that acceptable and will campaign and argue against such a view.

When Trident leaves Scotland, it will be heading for the knacker's yard. We are not threatening to put it in Merseyside, Devonport or indeed Milford Haven in Wales. I note that the last was another option that was discussed but, once people noticed that there were three petrochemical facilities in the area, they thought that it might be a bit too dangerous to put Trident there and went against the idea.

As for the jobs at Faslane and Coulport, there are, according to the MOD, 564 jobs that are

directly linked to Trident, while the conventional naval base accounts for the employment of all other staff. It is the intention of SNP members that the conventional naval base will take up the staff who are employed on Trident.

Moreover, the loss of so many conventional military jobs under the Westminster Government—we remember the disgraceful redundancy notices that were handed out to our front-line troops while on duty in Afghanistan—is another example of how money is being wasted on Trident and is therefore not available to maintain our useful conventional forces.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You should be drawing to a close, Mr Kidd.

**Bill Kidd:** Internationally, nuclear weapons-free zones are a growing phenomenon and the way forward for more and more nations and regions in our world. That is how I want our country to go forward. Trident is wrong and I want us to support Ban Ki-moon's call for a nuclear weapons convention that leads to a nuclear weapons-free world.

15:24

**Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab):** The Austrian philosopher Paul Watzlawick once said:

"The belief that one's own view of reality is the only reality is the most dangerous of all delusions."

He died in 2007, so it is possible that he could have made his observation after watching the development of the SNP, but even if he did not, his apposite observation is certainly a valid interpretation of the thinking of the Scottish Government when it comes to its position on nuclear missiles. "Deluded" hardly suffices to describe the SNP's current defence policy. "Fantasy", "illusion", "pipe dream"—you name it, the SNP concocts it.

For example, it appears that NATO rules will not apply to the SNP—oh no. When Angus Robertson rolls his tank on to the lawn of NATO headquarters to tell it to get Trident out of Scotland, the might of the biggest military alliance that the world has ever known will cower in fear as he raises his kilt, "Braveheart" style, to moon NATO into submission.

The SNP has decided—as a matter of principle, mind you; not as part of a cynical attempt to convince a sceptical electorate in the run-up to the referendum—that it is possible for Scotland to be both a member of the NATO nuclear club and to have its own set of rules to play by. Although Germany can oppose nuclear missiles on its soil and still be forced to have them, and smaller NATO countries can object to nuclear missiles

crossing through their territory yet can do nothing about it, Scotland should have no fear, because NATO's might will not stand like a mighty oak in the face of a resolution that was passed at the SNP conference; it will wither as if it were naught but a weed and shrivel under a barrage of assertions from the first battalion of the Brigadoon foot-in-mouth regiment.

As with all the SNP myths, this one is based on the notion that Scotland has some kind of moral superiority over the rest of the UK. What kind of morality is it that suggests that you are better than someone else by sending them something that you do not want for yourself? That is like feeling good about throwing a dog poo over the fence into your neighbour's garden. There is nothing to feel superior about in doing that; that is just another delusion on the part of the SNP. The SNP thinks that the Scottish people will be more likely to vote for independence if it can convince them that an independent Scotland can get rid of nuclear weapons.

The recent poll that was conducted for Scottish CND—the organisation that is itself becoming more like the campaign for nuclear delusion—clearly indicates that Scots who want to be part of the UK are as much opposed to nuclear weapons as the separatists are.

**Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** Can the member help me? He talks about independence. Who owns the code on the guidance of Trident missiles once they have been fired—the UK or the USA?

**Michael McMahon:** The member knows. We are not arguing that independence is the issue here; it is SNP members who are arguing that independence will solve the problem. We know that Trident is not an independent nuclear deterrent in the way that—[*Interruption.*]

**Chic Brodie:** That is what you said.

**Michael McMahon:** No, I did not. If you look back at what I said, you will find that I did not say that.

Most people know—because Scots are not stupid—that it is not possible to wish difficult situations away just on a political whim. International relations are not as simple as the SNP spin machine would have us delude ourselves, and the general populace knows that.

Jean Urquhart, the Greens and the other independent MSPs are absolutely right when they state that membership of NATO—whether as part of the UK or as an independent Scotland—is a barrier to the removal of Trident. A country that is in NATO must accept that it is part of an alliance that is centred on a nuclear first-strike policy. Therefore, if we are to get rid of nuclear missiles in

Scotland and be part of NATO, we must get the UK to play its part in making NATO a nuclear-free alliance. Making Scotland independent will not remove the UK's or NATO's nuclear arsenal.

Like me, many people will recognise that it is the UK that holds Trident and that only the UK can get rid of it. If Scotland stays part of the UK, it can play a part in any decision to remove Trident or to prevent its replacement. If Scotland leaves the UK, it will become like Ireland—a near neighbour that can do nothing to influence what happens with Trident.

I have no doubt that a truly independent Scotland could, like Ireland, be free of nuclear missiles on its territory, but a Scotland that is in NATO will not be able to pick and choose like a neutral country.

**Keith Brown:** Does the member accept that only three members of NATO have nuclear weapons and that all the rest of them do not? It is perfectly possible to be a member of NATO and not have nuclear weapons. The vast majority of members of NATO are in that position.

**Michael McMahon:** The minister must accept that it is not possible to say that Scotland would not have nuclear weapons on its soil—the situation would be the same as it is for Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. It is not possible to be part of NATO but not to play by the rules of NATO.

The Scottish Government will win the vote at 5 pm and will satisfy and reassure itself. However, deep down, SNP members have to know that the Scottish Government is deluding itself with its position on Trident. The split that emerged at the SNP conference showed that ordinary party members understand what the Government is trying to do. No doubt those same SNP MSPs who opposed the change in policy but who stayed in the party will be back in line tonight and will once again be fully signed-up members of the Stepford gang.

Come 5 pm, as Dr Carl Sagan said,

“It is far better to grasp the universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.”

SNP members can keep fooling themselves if they like, but the Scottish people will not be fooled by their posturing next autumn.

15:31

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** At present, there are more than 200 nuclear bombs in Scotland. Most of them are on Trident submarines operating from Faslane, 25 miles from the centre of Glasgow. That is almost enough bombs to wipe out humanity. In 2007, the UK Government said that

building a replacement for Trident would cost £20 billion and that the running costs would be £1.5 billion a year for 30 years. That gives a minimum of £65 billion. What else could we spend that £65 billion on?

Trident is economically inept, morally repugnant and spiritually bereft. The presence of these weapons in Scotland's waters is an insult to the people of Scotland. It is an insult to all of us who believe that peace is preserved by diplomacy before war and by compassion before coercion. It is an insult to all of us who believe in spending public money more wisely.

I am not a pacifist, but I recognise the impotence, vanity and sheer waste in a weapon such as Trident. It cannot be a defensive weapon, and we are promised that it will never be used in aggression, so what exactly is its purpose? I would rather be a citizen of a nation that looks to persuade and co-operate rather than bully and cajole, and I would rather be that citizen safe in the knowledge that my country and my world were free of weapons of mass destruction.

I was saddened when Labour turned its back on disarmament and fell in love with the bomb. I was saddened when a Labour Government in London decided to renew Trident at a time when Paul Sinclair and Iain Gray were special advisers to that Blair Government. That was bad enough, but we discovered on Monday that Labour wants to do it on the cheap. Not only would it send these monstrous weapons on patrol around the world; Labour wants sailors to go to sea in substandard equipment carrying the world's most dangerous cargo. We know enough about Labour's record of sending people into harm's way with substandard equipment from its days of waging war in Iraq. It could be even worse if the submarines are unsuitable.

The Ministry of Defence told us in January that Trident is too dangerous to be stored in England—so that is why it is in Scotland. The final decision has been delayed by the Westminster Government until after the independence referendum. That means that Scotland might save the UK from itself, by voting yes and removing the option. However, there is no way of telling what people who want to keep these horrific packages of death would do—they might want to foist them on an English city, which is just as abhorrent for me.

**Ruth Davidson:** Will the member give way?

**Christina McKelvie:** I have heard enough from better together today.

The sheer inhumanity of spending billions of pounds on buying and running these things while forcing people out of their houses by cutting their benefits is breathtaking. I cannot believe that a

single member of the Parliament would sanction that, and I hope that I am proved right.

I make a plea to members. If they are spared long enough to die in their old age, what do they want to tell their children and grandchildren their legacy is? What do they want their political legacy to be? Will they be content to say that they supported another generation of immoral monsters lurking on our west coast? Will they be happy to have spent yet more public money on unusable, unthinkable and outdated carriers of multiple death? Will they be able to look back with a clear conscience and say that, at a time of restricted public spending, they were content to spend that money on weapons rather than welfare, on death machines rather than health machines and on poison rather than people? Can they look their future selves in the eye and say, "Yes, those are my priorities." I am proud to say that I will put people first, I will put health first and I will put welfare first.

Labour seems to have developed an obsession with squirrels lately.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Christina McKelvie:** Look—there's a squirrel!

However, that obsession is better than its obsession with war and weapons of mass destruction. I would rather focus on removing these weapons from Scottish waters.

Labour abstained on the vote on the debate on the Iraq war yesterday and supported the Tories in taking more money from benefit claimants in London. Need I mention workfare? I only hope that a tiny remnant of principle remains and that we will see an echo of the memory of the once-proud Labour principle of nuclear disarmament. Labour's principles are threadbare now. Labour members are barely distinguishable from their Tory colleagues in the better together campaign.

Defence may be a reserved issue under the strict legal terms of the Scotland Act 1998, but morality, decency and common sense are not. We have a moral duty to oppose that which we see as a waste of national resources. We also have a duty, which was engaged in our name in 1960, to seek complete nuclear disarmament. Whether like me people see nuclear weapons as immoral and illegal under international law, or not, we each have a duty to seek their removal.

The case against nuclear weapons covers morality, public expenditure, legality and the imperative of treaties that were signed in our name, to say nothing of the waste of having our armed services holding weapons that cannot be used. We have the opportunity today to make it clear that we believe that nuclear weapons have

no place in Scotland and no place in our world, and we should take that opportunity and vote for the Government's motion at 5 o'clock.

15:36

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** In his book, "Arguing for Independence: Evidence, Risks and the Wicked Issues", the late Stephen Maxwell wrote:

"independence could be expected to bring substantial environmental benefits ... the reduction, if not complete elimination of the greatest discrete non-carbon threat to Scotland's environment"

and that of our neighbours through the scrapping of Trident and all nuclear submarines.

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Rob Gibson:** Not at this time.

I will explore the environmental impacts of the Trident missiles and nuclear submarines that threaten Scotland's very existence. Their removal from Faslane and Coulport is supported by three quarters of Scots, or more. It would reduce the risk to Scotland's environment of exposure to catastrophic damage caused by major nuclear accidents or by deliberate terrorist attack. However, UK policy concentrates its entire fleet of nuclear-powered submarines at Faslane, thus adding seven planned Astute class hunter-killer subs to the existing Trafalgar class and the Vanguard class Trident strategic missile craft. Even basing Astute and Trafalgar subs at Faslane perpetuates the threat of terrorist attack or catastrophic accident with their highly destructive conventional weapons, including cruise missiles, to which cyber attack adds new complications.

An accident could happen, not just at Faslane but anywhere that is frequented by nuclear submarines. Therefore, as Scottish CND has pointed out, the whole of Scotland is at risk. The UK Government ruled out an alternative home for Trident when Scotland regains her independence. It says that 166,000 people live within 5km of Devonport dockyard while only 5,200 live in a similar zone around Faslane. "Societal contamination" would be close to the "tolerability criterion level" despite the 2.5 million Scots who are living around Glasgow. But what is new? Unionists have been turning a blind eye to popular fears about nuclear accidents ever since *Polaris* was based at Holy Loch instead of Fort William or Mallaig.

As for the safety of submarines, Trident warheads and the life cycle of strategic weapons of mass destruction, we need some evidence. In April 2011, the *Sunday Herald* revealed that HMS Vengeance limped back to its Clyde base on



auxiliary motors after a training exercise had to be cut short when an object blocked its propulsor—a large encased propeller at the stern—and slowed down the Trident sub John Large, a nuclear consultant, said in *The Guardian*:

“One of our top-secret stealth submarines was suddenly crippled at sea, making her a lame sitting duck on the surface.”

Another Trident submarine, HMS Vanguard, collided with a French nuclear submarine in the north Atlantic in 2009. The MOD has admitted that 16 crashes involving UK nuclear submarines took place from 1998 to November 2010 and that more than half of those accidents occurred in the seas around Scotland: three around Skye, one near Lewis, one in the Firth of Clyde and another in the North Channel off Galloway. Two more were in unspecified places “west of Scotland”. Moreover, another accident in the Mediterranean in 2009 had gone unreported. Those incidents were revealed as a result of parliamentary questions by Angus Robertson MP, the SNP’s defence spokesperson.

On 16 December 2012, another newspaper report told of nuclear submarine HMS Vigilant, which had recently undergone a £300 million overhaul, being disabled on the way home to the Clyde after test-firing a Trident missile in the Atlantic off the coast of Florida on 21 October. The incident was revealed by one of its crew members, who tweeted:

“Stuck in the USA for Xmas.”

In a PQ answered in July 1998, George Robertson—Lord Robertson of NATO—told Jeremy Corbyn that warheads on the Trident missiles would serve 25 to 30 years of the Trident force but that

“disposal costs will depend upon future plans for the use or disposal of fissile material from the warheads.” —[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 14 July 1998; Vol 316, c 167W.]

Irradiated materials such as those used in the fuel cores of the submarines are hazardous and very difficult to transport. Dounreay, Rosyth and Devonport send them to Sellafield for reprocessing, but low and intermediate-level material goes by road, rail and sea in a steady and dangerous stream. Although discharges into the sea are highly regulated, it all makes for a huge radioactive legacy.

On 22 October 2010, the nuclear submarine HMS Astute ran aground near Broadford in Skye for 10 hours, causing huge repair bills and raising concerns in Skye. Last November, the submarine was dubbed “slow, leaky, rusty”; according to a headline in *The Guardian*,

“Britain’s £10bn submarine”

was

“beset by design flaws”.

However, last December, the former defence minister Sir Nicholas Harvey on behalf of the Liberal Democrats argued for a compromise on Trident, telling the Nuclear Education Trust that only two Trident submarines could be replaced or, indeed, that the Astute class could carry nuclear warheads.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** You should be drawing to a close, Mr Gibson.

**Rob Gibson:** All that I can say is that Danny Alexander is now in charge.

The environmental hazards of warheads, missiles and nuclear submarines are a constant danger to Scotland and it is up to us in this Parliament to lead the fight to get rid of them for us and our neighbours for ever.

15:43

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** This week, members might be forgiven for thinking that they have been elected to a different chamber, given that an overwhelming majority of our parliamentary time has been spent on debating issues that are the UK Parliament’s responsibility.

Having spent a little time reflecting on the SNP’s motivations, I begin to understand that this is nothing more than the parliamentary equivalent of Christina McKelvie’s shouting, “Look—there’s a squirrel!” Such is the SNP’s cynicism that it is using our parliamentary time to build up a head of steam prior to its conference at the weekend in the vain hope that delegates will not notice just how incompetent it has been at running the yes Scotland campaign. After all, even the cybernats have monstereed elements of the campaign and have been openly critical on Twitter of a number of key figures.

I sympathise with and understand the SNP’s need to create a diversion, but it is all very disappointing. In that respect, at least, it is being consistent in its operation. It is all reminiscent of groundhog day—another SNP debate, another reserved issue. How about debating some of the things that the SNP is responsible for? How about debating national health service waiting lists? On that point, I will take Jim Eadie’s intervention.

**Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):** I thank Ms Baillie for taking my intervention, but I want to encourage her to address the issue of Trident. Does she not accept that the UK has responsibilities under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty? Does she see the expansion of Trident as compatible with that obligation?

**Jackie Baillie:** I have got the point. He is eating into my time. He had nothing to say about NHS

waiting lists. *[Interruption.]* I hear Joe FitzPatrick's voice warning that we cannot discuss NHS waiting lists. Perhaps that is a little bit too tricky just now. How about the bedroom tax? Cue Joe FitzPatrick. *[Interruption.]* No, no: steer clear of that one. The SNP does not want to expose the fact that it is doing nothing to mitigate the worst impact on the people of Scotland. How about child poverty? Oh, but it has made no progress on that. Let us stick to blaming Westminster. Let us not debate the things that the SNP has responsibility for because it would be found out.

I turn to the substance of the debate.

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** Will the member give way?

**Jackie Baillie:** I have heard enough from Mr FitzPatrick.

I have always acknowledged that there are many different views in this chamber, across parties and within them. However, wherever we stand—as a unilateralist or a multilateralist—we have a clear responsibility to think through the consequences of our actions. People have heard me speak before about the economic impact of Faslane and I make no apology for doing so again. There are 11,000 jobs dependent on the base, 6,500 employed directly at Faslane and Coulport—*[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jackie Baillie:** No, I will not. Mr Brodie should listen.

There are a further 4,500 jobs in the supply chain, using standard income multipliers. On top of that, a further 1,500 to 2,000 jobs are coming to the area due to the decision to relocate all the UK's submarines there. Those figures were supplied by the MOD and by Scottish Enterprise, which commissioned a survey from EKOS into the economic impact. While I know that members are all very keen on debating the numbers and that it excites many of them, let me be frank. The SNP looks ridiculous when it claims that a lesser number are affected. At one stage, it was only 500 and then it doubled to 1,000. However, the reality is that there would not be a strategic need for Faslane and Coulport and all the jobs would go.

**Bruce Crawford:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jackie Baillie:** No.

There is a suggestion that the Scottish navy would be based at Faslane, but no one in the SNP could tell me how many submarines or frigates that would mean, or even how many fishery

protection vessels. The truth is that the SNP does not know and certainly will not say.

What is the reason why the SNP will not say? Maybe it is because Angus Robertson has consistently refused to guarantee that the number of jobs already at Faslane would be retained after separation. Maybe it is because John Swinney talked in his leaked paper about slashing the amount spent on defence. Maybe it is because the SNP just does not have a clue.

It is interesting that Stuart Crawford, a defence consultant to whom the SNP pays attention, has said that Faslane would sustain only around 1,000 jobs as the future base of a separate Scottish navy. What does the SNP intend to do with the other 10,000 people? Are they simply to be thrown on the scrap heap? Do they not matter in an independent Scotland?

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member give way?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is in her last minute.

**Jackie Baillie:** The SNP does not even begin to consider the impact that that would have on the shipbuilding industry on the Clyde. Ninety per cent of the orders received by Scotland's shipbuilding industry are awarded by the MOD. Separation would threaten those jobs, too.

I say as gently as I can to the SNP and, in particular, to Christina McKelvie, who I am pleased to see is back in the chamber, that the SNP's policy is to use the money saved from Trident to fund conventional defences. It is not for welfare or for funding hospitals and schools. It is not for tackling child poverty. Please stop pretending like this because it is disingenuous and it diminishes members' contributions.

Finally, there is nothing moral or principled about the SNP's approach. Simply moving Trident south of the border does not reduce nuclear weapons. The SNP may promise a constitutional ban, but by joining NATO it is explicitly allowing NATO partners to use Scottish waters for nuclear subs, something that its own First Minister confirmed on the BBC "Politics Show" straight after the SNP conference.

I ask the SNP to please stop posturing and get on with the responsibilities that it has.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I remind members that courtesy is paramount in the chamber, please.

15:49

**Colin Keir (Edinburgh Western) (SNP):** It is always nice to follow Jackie Baillie.

"Our independent deterrent has become virtually irrelevant except in the context of domestic politics. Rather

than perpetuating Trident, the case is much stronger for funding our armed forces with what they need to meet the commitments actually laid upon them."

That is not from the letter mentioned by the minister but from another written to *The Times* in January 2009 by former chief of defence staff Field Marshal Lord Bramall, former Adjutant General Lord Ramsbotham and General Sir Hugh Beach, the former deputy commander-in-chief of UK land forces. They pointed out that the huge cost of replacing Trident would be better spent on improving conventional forces. They say:

"We argue that it is conventional weapons that we now need for their pinpoint accuracy and their ability to help our forces in the sort of conflicts that are taking place".

That means that we have to question the huge expense of Trident, which is limiting what we can do.

They point out that it is also clear that Britain's nuclear deterrent is not truly independent. We do not own the missiles and it is absolutely unthinkable that we should ever consider using it or threatening to use it without the clearance of the United States. The generals point out that Trident is an inappropriate weapons system—for example, they cannot see Trident being used against nuclear blackmail by international terrorists. Trident is a cold war weapon; it is not a weapon for the situation that we are in now. It is suggested that the decision to renew Trident was driven more by political considerations than the true requirements of national defence.

When we consider the defence and basing reviews of current and past Westminster Governments, the arguments for ditching Trident become clearer. Current planning by the Liberal Democrat-Tory coalition requires that the number of full-time army personnel be dropped to 82,000. That means that you will be able to fit the entire British army into Wembley stadium with 8,000 seats to spare. Does that make Trident a first strike weapon? I think that that is morally repugnant and we should fight against it. As Bill Kidd pointed out, that, along with soldiers being handed their P45s as they return from Afghanistan, shows the true commitment that Westminster has to our fighting forces.

We do have weapons of mass destruction and they are sited less than a couple of hours' drive up the motorway from the Parliament. Over the years there have been countless debates on nuclear weapons, countless protests and numerous protesters arrested. At no point has any Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Defence or—even more worrying—Secretary of State for Scotland taken the slightest notice of those protests.

In my opinion, those who have held such offices of state have all held similar views. It is a set of

views based on the past power of the British Empire. I am convinced that many senior politicians and Westminster mandarins still believe that Britain is a huge world power and that atlases are dominated by the colour pink. There is also the fear that, should those abhorrent weapons be given up, Britain would lose all influence with the major powers of today. Even the generals dispute that in their letter.

Under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty five states—the US, the UK, France, Russia and China—are apparently legally entitled to possess nuclear weapons. How can it be right that any country in the world can have a legal power to obliterate all the others on the planet? Surely none has that right.

In Scotland we have a crazy situation in which the views of the vast majority of the population are solidly against nuclear weapons. The irony is that if every member sent from Scotland to the Westminster Parliament was mandated by the Scottish voters to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction on the Clyde, they would lose the vote—it is as simple as that. It is the basic arithmetic of having only 59 out of 650 MPs. Besides, I do not see a mad rush south of the border to re-site the nuclear missiles down in Portsmouth, Devonport or wherever. That makes us really redefine the phrase "democratic deficit".

I, for one, am sick and tired of waiting for Scottish Westminster politicians, particularly Labour ones, to use the influence that they claim they have and to show the so-called union dividend. As we have seen this afternoon, the self-proclaimed party of socialism is now firmly nuclear—there is no change there—and all those Labour politicians who have appeared on countless stages over the years can now be disregarded. It has been shown that the party is hypocritical.

The bases that are currently being used for our nuclear forces will be required after the missiles have been removed. A strategy will be put in place to ensure that Scotland is defended properly. I believe that any constitution that is drawn up should have a declaration against weapons of mass destruction ever being deployed here. We cannot trust Westminster Governments of any political persuasion to get rid of those weapons of mass destruction or to look after our conventional forces. Next year, Scotland will get to choose between a Parliament that will end the existence of nuclear weapons on our soil and the Westminster Parliament, which will keep them. I believe that Scotland will vote yes to a nuclear-free Scotland. I support the motion.

15:56

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** This is an important debate, particularly for the 80 per cent of Scots who oppose these weapons of mass destruction, as indicated in a recent opinion poll. Last week, the UK Secretary of State for Defence came to Scotland to tell us that an independent Scotland could not afford to defend itself. Perhaps he should have paid a bit more attention to the Ministry of Defence's spending patterns, which, over the past 10 years, have resulted in an underspend of £7.4 billion in Scotland. In other words, we contribute more to the UK defence budget than we get back. The only time that Scotland gets more than the rest of the UK is when cuts are announced or when it comes to the siting of weapons of mass destruction.

The defence secretary also attempted to pour scorn on an independent Scotland's defence capabilities. He claimed that, if Scotland were to get a share of existing UK assets, it would get

"half a submarine and under one Red Arrow."

Surely that poor excuse for an argument highlights the shockingly poor state of the UK's current conventional defence capabilities. If the UK Government is relying on the Red Arrows to defend these islands, we have a major problem.

Trident has been a constant drain on the MOD's resources—so much so that the UK Government has cut back on conventional defence to pay for it. Currently, Scottish taxpayers pay £163 million a year towards the running of Trident. Furthermore, it costs £350 million a year to fund the design work for the renewal of Trident, which sustains 1,200 jobs. That amounts to £300,000 per job per year, which is a lot of money for one job. We have to ask ourselves what else that £300,000 per job per year could deliver for our communities.

The voices that are warning about Trident renewal come from various sources and not just the SCND or anti-nuclear politicians. Professor Malcolm Chalmers of the Royal United Services Institute is on record as stating:

"sharp increases in spending on Trident renewal in the early 2020s seem set to mean further years of austerity for conventional equipment plans."

That is because Trident will account for a massive 35 per cent of the MOD's capital expenditure. Some Conservatives are against Trident. The former defence secretary Lord King has stated:

"It is certainly not obvious to me that there is any longer a need for a major nuclear system based on 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week availability."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 January 2013; Vol 742, c 1243.]

His colleague former defence secretary Michael Portillo is also on record as stating his objection to Trident. He said:

"No—it's completely past its sell-by date."

He continued:

"It's a tremendous waste of money. It's done entirely for reasons of national prestige ... and at the margins it is proliferation."

However, the best argument that I can marshal against Trident today comes from an email that was sent to me by a constituent in advance of today's debate, which states:

"Dear Stuart McMillan, your party has an admirable record on consistent opposition to the immoral and obscenely expensive weapons of mass destruction sited at Faslane. Please do pass on my full opposition, don't be fobbed off with pretended practicalities. If it is at all possible, get rid of them now! (Don't even wait for independence!)."

That came from the Rev David Coleman, the minister at the Greenock west United Reformed church.

We are all aware of the Labour-led Scottish Affairs Committee at Westminster spreading fears and smears about defence and saying that the rest of the UK state would not order Scottish goods for its armed forces. We have heard that again today from Jackie Baillie. In one of that committee's reports, we are told that no Royal Navy vessels would be built in Scotland. However, the report omitted the comments from Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews, who confirmed that the UK Government would keep the option to build such vessels on the Clyde if Scotland became independent. Who are we to believe—a partisan Labour MP protecting his Tory masters or a vice admiral of the Royal Navy?

Furthermore, given that the UK has ordered fleet auxiliary tankers from South Korea, why would it not turn to Scotland, whose workers and yards build a world-class product? Why would a future London Government deny itself the best product on the market? Perhaps the ultimate irony is that, allegedly, a future London Government would not be prepared to order ships from Scotland but would be prepared to order Trident from the USA.

Removing Trident would not mean that there would be no future for Faslane—quite the opposite, in fact. Scotland needs a defence base on the Clyde, and the SNP has given a commitment to operate conventional naval forces from HMNB Clyde following independence. We believe that the Trident weapons system that is currently based on the Clyde is not sustainable morally, strategically or economically. As the report that was produced jointly for the STUC and Scottish CND highlights, there is a future for Faslane and that report demonstrates that

"the replacement of Trident will cost Scotland more jobs than it will provide".

Who knows, actually? As is highlighted in an article in this weekend's *Scottish Sunday Express*, following research carried out by my colleague Chic Brodie, there may potentially have been 30 years of lost economic opportunity from non-Trident jobs.

As the STUC and Scottish CND report stresses, the funding that is currently wasted on weapons of mass destruction could be directed to boosting the national and local economy, particularly in the west of Scotland. Have no doubts that independence will bring a positive future for the Faslane base, which will serve as Scotland's main conventional naval facility. The funding that is being wasted on Trident will be redirected to boost local and national economic growth in industries that would benefit from the skills base that is currently at Faslane.

The UK Secretary of State for Defence has said that the SNP's plans are vague and lack credibility. Well, what is not vague are the cuts in welfare spending, such as the bedroom tax, that are paying for Trident missiles. If the supporters of Trident want certainty, as I challenged Ken Macintosh earlier, why do they not tell us who they are prepared to use the missiles on? There is absolutely no certainty—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You should be drawing to a close, please.

**Stuart McMillan:** The only certainty that we have today is that a yes vote in 2014 is the only way to remove these weapons of mass destruction from Scotland.

16:02

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** The debate has engaged people who, though they have a variety of views, are united in the common belief that the Trident missile system has served any purpose that it may once have had.

The argument that I want to develop is that investing in Trident kills our servicemen and women. Having been engaged in this subject since I first became a member of CND, almost from the outset in the 1960s, I suggest that we look at what the UK Government has to say about Trident. The UK Government says that Trident is the "ultimate guarantee" of our national security against nuclear adversaries. Perhaps a case can be made for that, as the Tories will continue to argue, but politics is about making choices. First, Trident is not a weapon that the UK Government is able to control, as the US decides when, where, how and whether such weapons can be used.

More fundamentally, as a defence strategy, Trident fails utterly. The real threats to Scotland—

and, for that matter, the UK—are not now from nuclear nations. That is not the paramount issue. The threats come entirely from elsewhere and are the kind of threats that need to be dealt with by soldiers and by boots on the ground. When we spend money on nuclear weapons, we take money away from capability for those who put boots on the ground.

As the minister highlighted in his opening remarks, there are effects from the defence choices that we make. In Kosovo, it was reported that many of the soldiers could not get their mark 4 radios to work effectively in the mountainous terrain. Fortunately, the mobile phone network worked reasonably well, so soldiers paid for their own calls on their own telephones to tell headquarters what was happening on the front line. That lack of investment in modern equipment put troops in danger.

In Iraq, the very simple problem is that it is a bit hot, but the MOD did not seem to know that. Reports were that the rubber in the soles of the soldiers' boots was melting. Many of the soldiers used the internet to order leather-soled boots so that they could march across the deserts of Iraq. A choice was made to spend on Trident and a choice was made to provide inadequate equipment to our military in areas of threat.

Afghanistan illustrates the point even more. I choose a particular point in time, when there were 66,000 US troops in Afghanistan, mainly in Helmand, who experienced a casualty rate of 3 per cent. There were 9,000 UK troops in Afghanistan at the same time, with a casualty rate of 4.9 per cent—a 60 per cent higher casualty rate among UK soldiers. Why was that? The reason was captured by United States defence secretary Robert Gates. It was all down to helicopters—having them or not. Initially, the US did not have enough helicopters in Afghanistan. Robert Gates reported that no double amputees were surviving battlefield injury. Once the US put in helicopters—and they now have a large number of them—the helicopters could not only scoop up the injured and get them back to the hospital, where they now largely survive; they could also transport troops to areas of difficulty in comparative safety, free from interventions from roadside improvised explosive devices.

The UK has very few helicopters in Afghanistan. What is the effect for our soldiers of that difference in investment in equipment? The effect is that difference in the casualty rate. That is 177 soldiers, whose families do not have them now. The people of Wootton Bassett, to their eternal credit, have turned out on each occasion that a coffin comes back. They would not have wanted those 177 soldiers to be returned and marched down their street, and neither would I. The price of

Trident is bodies, when we do not equip our soldiers to undertake that most difficult mission that we ask of them. I do not deploy any argument about the conflicts themselves. I utterly support the soldiers and demand that we divert the money away from that weapon which cannot and will not ever be used, into properly equipping our soldiers so that they can defend our interests.

This is not something that I have felt passionate about in the last five minutes: I have always felt passionate about it. I remember, during the Cuban missile crisis, a friend being sick at the side of the rugby pitch when a black cloud appeared, because he thought that it was a nuclear cloud. This is something that engages real people in real concerns. Trident must go.

16:09

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):**

Whatever our way of tackling the dreadful issue of nuclear weapons—whatever our approach—nuclear weapons are an unacceptable part of our world. That said, very few constituents have raised the issue with me recently, although many constituents have contacted me about other issues. Many of those issues were very immediate; some were desperate; and many were about devolved matters, or concerns that we could mitigate. Kinship carers are living under pressure; young people are worried about finding or keeping a job; and many people have constant worries about transport. This week, we might also have debated the very current issues around the Leveson inquiry and developments here in Scotland.

To state the obvious, defence is a reserved issue. However, we are here today with a debate on the future of nuclear weapons. There are a range of opinions on that matter in my political party and other parties. Decisions on the future of Trident should be based on evidence and on what is in our national interest. Would the world have believed that apartheid could be deconstructed, or that the Berlin wall would fall?

In our own small ways, we all tackle issues as momentous as nuclear weapons in the best way that we can. I and others have held and continue to hold a principled position against nuclear weapons. Long ago, I lived between Upper Heyford and Greenham Common. Along with others, I was what we called a legal observer for my group. I was then involved in direct action, and I was arrested, charged and convicted for obstruction. Although that was a small thing in the grand scheme of things, it was a hard decision to take as a young teacher. I feel saddened not so much for myself but for those who have made a lifetime commitment to working to rid us of nuclear weapons—much more than I have done—that

they can find their principled position muddled up and sucked into the constitutional issue here in Scotland.

The *Financial Times* contributor Max Hastings, who is pro nuclear weapons, commented earlier this month:

“Professor Sir Michael Howard, at 90 still Britain’s wisest thinker on strategy, surprised me recently by saying that he now opposed the Trident replacement. I reminded him that he had always favoured it. ‘Yes, but as Keynes said, when circumstances change, I change my mind,’ he said. ‘We simply can’t afford it any more.’”

There are indeed questions to be asked and answered about cost and Trident replacement—about cost in relation to the straitened times in which we and many of our constituents find ourselves here and now, and about spending, some of which might be shifted from our defence budget to other priorities such as child poverty. The list must not be too long, however, if there is indeed to be such a shift.

What is Trident for now? One could raise questions about the utility of nuclear weapons and their central role in NATO strategy. Most people would agree that the world has moved on, and that the threats that are faced by countries such as ours are more to do with asymmetrical warfare than was the case in the past. Should NATO members perhaps focus their efforts on counterterrorism and counter-insurgency, rather than retaining a surplus of nuclear weapons? Could it be argued that the UK’s diminishing defence budget could be better used through contributing to collective defence in that manner?

In 2007, I made a contribution to a paper about the economic and employment consequences of cancelling Trident. In the chapter concerned, I explored the opportunity that defence diversification presented to the renewables industry. Some of the figures have been rightly challenged, and they are not up to date any more anyway. Indeed, some of the arguments have moved on. In geographical terms, it could be argued that the locus of renewables is now more focused in Aberdeen and the far north. However, there are many other possibilities to consider—

**Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Claudia Beamish:** No, I need to make progress. I want to get on to other matters, too.

There are many other possibilities in addition to conventional defence. To highlight but one, there is the chance of retrofitting and building wellboats for fish farms here in Scotland, which was brought up at the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee during deliberations on the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill.

There is potential for this Parliament to urge the UK Government to do more work with regard to cutting nuclear weapons within the alliance structure of NATO and as a member of the Security Council.

**Keith Brown:** Will the member give way?

**Claudia Beamish:** I need to finish—I am going into my last minute.

We could be ideally placed to encourage other nuclear states to work towards realising article VI of the NPT, which obliges signatories

“to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”.

As a member of the Security Council, the UK, encouraged by this Parliament, could also make efforts to implement the five-point plan, which suggests that Security Council members could

“commence discussions, perhaps within its Military Staff Committee, on security issues in the nuclear disarmament process.”

I am not saying that the answers to any of the questions that I have posed will be anything other than deeply complex to disentangle if we are to work towards diminishing the horrible risk that is presented by nuclear weapons in our world. We must all try to do that, however we can.

16:14

**Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP):** I commend to all members the scrap Trident campaign activity that will be running from 13 to 15 April. More details are available on the web. One Labour MSP has already supported it, and I am hopeful that others will follow—or at least I was, before I heard their speeches.

I draw attention to that activity because for me, the cause is not just political; it is personal. Although I represent our nation's capital, I—in common with the majority of my constituents, I think—was born somewhere else. I grew up on the shores of the Clyde, not 5 miles from Faslane. My family's shop in Helensburgh thrived on the custom that naval personnel brought to the town; I have relatives who still work at the base; and, frankly, I can still close my eyes and visualise the Kilcreggan peninsula with the great black silhouette of a Vanguard-class submarine sailing in front of it.

Growing up with nuclear weapons so close by, I saw what I can only call a form of madness. We knew that the nuclear weapons were there, but the only way to live our lives was to put out of our minds the inevitable conclusion. We just put up with the situation.

Nuclear weapons exist for one purpose. We cannot use them for peacekeeping, for disaster relief, or for humanitarian intervention. We can use them only for mass destruction: the destruction of cities—all the terrible human cost of the Iraq war in one place in one second—or the destruction of armies. Any army that we would fight would be composed of young men who were forced from their homes to take up arms and a uniform, who were marched into their graves for the high offence of having been conscripted by a Government that was almost certainly despotic in its nature.

We can talk of deterrence—there has been a lot of talk of deterrence today—but that is just code for threatening to do such things rather than doing them. The difference between committing mass slaughter and threatening to commit mass slaughter is a fine moral hair to split.

Nuclear weapons are the weapons of politicians, not of generals. They are the weapons of presidents, prime ministers and tinpot dictators who want to strut on the world stage or sit on the UN Security Council—leaders who know that they would hide in their bunkers if their own people were consigned to destruction. If my nation was ever, God forbid, to suffer a nuclear attack, I would want to see those who perpetrated the attack being held accountable, not the hapless millions who already had to endure the misfortune of being ruled by them.

Deterrence can work in many dimensions. Many countries have substantial conventional deterrents and choose to seek their security through conventional means, such as Brazil, Japan, and Germany—for all that Germany has had its difficulties in achieving that. One country that gave up its nuclear weapons, post-apartheid South Africa, is a fine example that we have held up as a model to follow in many situations. In this, too, let us look at its example.

I am a bit perturbed by the tone of the debate thus far. It was not so long ago that the Labour Party agreed with this. The Helensburgh branch of the Labour Party in 1999—back before I had the right to vote, I must add—endorsed nuclear disarmament to applause from CND, but those days are long gone.

**Jackie Baillie:** Does the member accept that what we are arguing about are the 11,000 jobs, and that irrespective of the adoption of a unilateralist or a multilateralist position, the Helensburgh branch of the Labour Party would agree that we need to take care of the jobs too?

**Marco Biagi:** We have to keep employment up in that area, but I see the unedifying sight of Labour politicians trying to portray scares and smears; they are riding this unemployment fear

like Major Kong riding the bomb at the end of “Dr Strangelove”.

The fear of unemployment is potent, but perhaps Jackie Baillie should look at the report that was authored by the MSP just a few seats to her left, Claudia Beamish, which sets out—as well as alternatives—its analysis of the 11,000 jobs figure.

Let us remember that Faslane is more than Trident; it is Scotland's only full-scale naval base. We need only look at Norway's main base—I will not try to pronounce its name—with its thousands of personnel to see the potential for employment in the housing of Scotland's conventional naval forces after independence. Faslane is Trident's current digs—no more, no less—and I do not believe that an independent Scotland, whether in or out of NATO, would have any problems with getting rid of those weapons. Although I put on record my views on that issue, and I have explained them in detail elsewhere, I do not agree with the first part of Jean Urquhart's amendment.

Next year, Scotland has an opportunity. Only if this country votes yes will we serve Trident with final notice to quit for now and ever more. We will deliver a message to the councils of the world that we are no longer willing to just put up with it, and instead of putting nuclear weapons out of our minds, we will put them out of our country for good.

16:20

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** Trident is a cold war relic that was specifically designed to flatten Russian cities. It is a military dinosaur that is rapidly losing public support.

Today we have heard no good reasons for retaining nuclear weapons, never mind for renewing them for another half century. There are countless reasons why we should not commit to lumbering future generations with the obscenity of Trident. It makes no military sense, there is a serious moral question about deploying weapons that are designed specifically to slaughter millions of civilians, and the cost is astronomical.

The logical conclusion of the pro-Trident argument about the big, bad world out there is that every nation should rush to develop nuclear weapons. Turkey, perhaps, or Saudi Arabia—maybe Japan. How safe would we be then?

Strategically, Trident's worth is minimal. No one believes that it can or ever will be used. In reality, it is a desperate attempt by London to assert the illusion of British power post-empire. Air Commodore Alastair Mackie, vice-president of

CND and former hydrogen bomber pilot summed up the situation by saying:

“We regard having a deterrent as a virility symbol, like a stick-on hairy chest.”

Of course, the notion that Trident acts as a deterrent is demonstrably nonsense. As Field Marshall Lord Bramall explained, Trident renewal

“would not deter any of the threats and challenges—now more economic than military—likely to face this country in the foreseeable or even longer-term future.”—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 January 2013; Vol. 742, c 1229.]

Michael Portillo described renewing Trident as “nonsense”; it is strange to see Labour to the right of him on the issue. Well, maybe it is not.

Nuclear weapons do not deter terrorist groups, insurgents, rogue states or dictators. They did not deter Argentina from invading the Falklands, Vietnam from fighting the USA and China in the sixties and seventies, or Egypt and Syria from launching the Yom Kippur war. On the contrary, attempting to acquire nuclear weapons led to Israeli air strikes on Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981, and on Syria's al-Kibar nuclear facility in 2007. I do not doubt that Iran's nuclear ambitions will end in the same way.

Of course, committing to an expensive nuclear arsenal necessitates lower spending on conventional forces, which reduces defence capabilities. Ring fencing finance for Trident while cutting genuinely important defence spending means that it is now a case of all fur coat, as they say. Indeed, UK forces have suffered from chronic equipment shortages ranging from helicopters to armoured vehicles to boots and body armour. Service personnel have been sacked by email, strategically important bases have been closed, aircraft carriers have been built although there are no aircraft, and £4 billion-worth of Nimrod aircraft was hacked to pieces without ever having flown.

Despite those shortcomings in conventional defence, the UK Government, backed by a Labour Party that is desperate for votes in the south-east of England, looks set to commit to Trident renewal with its eye-watering multibillion pound price tag.

The Tories have not wavered in their support for nuclear weapons, but Labour is all over the place, as in every other policy area. Labour members opportunistically bob and weave, trying to face two ways at once; that is hardly surprising, given that they come from a party that believes in nothing but the pursuit of office. On the one hand, Labour claims to support multilateral disarmament, but Ed Miliband and Jim Murphy say that voting no in Scotland's referendum would guarantee another 50 years of Trident. They are the ones who are bringing Trident into the constitutional debate. It is time that Labour listened to the Scottish people,



81 per cent of whom are against Trident renewal, but the loyalty of Labour's puppet leadership in north Britain is to the bosses in London, not to Scotland.

We hear plenty of scaremongering that, following independence and Trident's removal, Faslane will close and thousands will lose their jobs. We have heard some of that today. Those claims have been exposed as wildly inaccurate at best and deliberate falsification, which is what I would say. An independent Scotland will base conventional naval forces at Faslane and improve Scotland's naval defence capability. That will not be difficult, especially considering the fact that Westminster does not take the defence of the North Sea seriously, with no frigates, corvettes or destroyers in Scotland, and all air reconnaissance being provided by Norway following the destruction of the Nimrods.

As for those who are directly employed on Trident, only 564 are actually based at Faslane at an annual estimated cost of more than £300,000 per job. There is no doubt that that money could be invested more constructively and create many more jobs in the civilian economy or indeed in conventional armed forces.

Of course, as alleged multilateralists, Labour members want those jobs to go as well—just not right now. Once again, they show themselves devoid of principles or conviction, as Ms Baillie made clear in her speech. Her remark about 11,000 jobs was absolute nonsense. Given the assumption that there would not be a boat of any size there—

**Jackie Baillie** *rose*—

**Kenneth Gibson:** Jack and the beanstalk—as predicted.

**Jackie Baillie:** I am sure that the member did not mean to make any personal insults and that he will reflect on that.

When the member visited Helensburgh to debate this very issue, the people made him aware that 11,000 jobs were dependent on the base. Does he not believe anyone else then?

**Kenneth Gibson:** Actually—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Gibson, you might wish to reflect on your name calling.

**Kenneth Gibson:** I will reflect on that in due course. No one mentioned this 11,000 figure and Ms Baillie knows fine well that that is complete nonsense.

Fourteen of the 15 newly independent republics that emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union—

**Jackie Baillie:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I have a point of order from Jackie Baillie.

**Kenneth Gibson:** —excluding Russia, removed the 9,775—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Point of order, Mr Gibson!

**Jackie Baillie:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The member might have no respect for me, but I would have thought that he should respect your position as Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I thank Ms Baillie for her point, which is not a point of order. Nevertheless, Mr Gibson and I will be having a conversation later. Please continue, Mr Gibson.

**Kenneth Gibson:** I look forward to that, Presiding Officer.

Fourteen of the 15 newly independent republics that emerged from the Soviet Union's dissolution, excluding Russia, removed the 9,775 nuclear warheads collectively on their soil. At the time of its independence, Ukraine had the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal, bigger, indeed, than China, France and the UK combined; however, in less than five years, it had completely removed all nuclear weapons, which was a far more challenging task than removing Trident from the Clyde. Other post-Soviet nations took even less time. Tactical nuclear weapons were also removed by Poland, the Czech Republic and the former East Germany, and Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Libya and South Africa have all cancelled their nuclear weapons programmes.

In conclusion—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I would be grateful if you could close.

**Kenneth Gibson:** —if Trident leaves, the MOD has already ruled out moving it to England, pointing to the unsuitability of housing Vanguard submarines there and the potential risk to the local population, which was not taken into account in Scotland. With Labour flip-flopping on the issue and the Tories' bloody-minded commitment to this nuclear vanity project it is clear that only independence will ensure that weapons of mass destruction are forever banished from Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Many thanks. We move to the closing speeches.

16:27

**Jean Urquhart:** We have had a good debate and, again, I repeat my support for the Scottish Government's bringing this entirely relevant matter to the chamber.

Ruth Davidson's suggestion that the retention of Trident nuclear missiles showed responsible government led to Alasdair Allan's brilliant question whether she was also suggesting that every country without a nuclear deterrent was irresponsible. Of course, the answer was that they were when perhaps the answer should have been that countries without nuclear weapons are more responsible with regard to global as well as local security.

**Ruth Davidson:** My point was that the UK was a responsible signatory to the NPT and that countries such as North Korea and Iran that, since the NPT's establishment, were seeking to bring on nuclear weapons were indeed irresponsible.

**Jean Urquhart:** I rest my case. We still have not heard a reasonable answer to Alasdair Allan's still relevant question.

All sides of the chamber will agree that multilateral disarmament is to be desired, but how do we achieve that? Somebody has to go first and I believe that, with independence, Scotland could do that and be the leader in the world as it has been in so many other areas.

We heard extraordinarily emotive language from Ms Davidson, who talked about us

"walking away from our neighbours".

In fact, we will be walking towards our neighbours.

Ruth Davidson gave us a terrific list of alternative uses for the money that would be saved by ending the nuclear deterrent, all of which have been suggested by members of the SNP. There is no lack of ideas—it is a shame that she could find nothing to recommend Trident.

**Ruth Davidson:** The comment about "walking away from our neighbours"

was a direct quote from Angus Robertson at the SNP conference, which I believe the member attended. My point in listing the huge number of alternatives was to point out the number of times her former colleagues in the SNP have spent the £163 million for Trident. By my reckoning, it is about 20 times per year.

**Jean Urquhart:** I am well aware of what the member intended, but the point is that those are all worthy areas on which to spend the money and areas where it is needed.

Ken Macintosh stated that the SNP is somehow not serious about getting rid of Trident and that the debate was some kind of jokey waste of time so that a bit of rhetoric about independence could be heard. How dare he? Many people have an ambition to rid the United Kingdom of nuclear weapons, but the difference is that his party has had its shot and failed.

**Ken Macintosh:** I certainly did not think that the SNP was joking—independence is a deadly serious matter. However, how does the SNP's desire to get rid of Trident square with its desire to remain as a member of NATO?

**Jean Urquhart:** The SNP has explained its position on that. I do not agree with it, so why would I try to explain it?

There is a real issue for the Labour Party. We know about the number of people with Labour Party membership cards who believe that the only route now to be rid of Trident on the Clyde is to vote yes in the referendum.

Mr Macintosh suggested that the issue that he again highlighted is shattering the unity of the SNP. I should know about that. The disagreement is not over the outcome of unilateral nuclear disarmament; it is about the route that we take to achieve the goal. The big common factor—and the big difference with the Labour Party, which has failed in its ambition—is self-determination by the Scottish people. I can assure Mr Macintosh that, on that, there is no disunity. Labour needs to understand that inescapable fact. Better together? I do not think so.

What a funny wee speech from Mr McMahon. When someone knows that they are wrong, they often cover it up by poking fun at people who are trying to deal with a serious subject. He is right that the Scots arnae stupit. They have had 60 years of political rhetoric and claims that we will be rid of Trident from the Clyde, but nobody has achieved it. Now, it is within the grasp of the Scottish people to achieve self-determination and unilateral nuclear disarmament, and to head towards multilateralism. I urge them to do that.

Those members who are not in the SNP or the Independent and Green group need to think on this: if they believe, as most of us seem to do, that the only option that is open is the one that everybody has, come October 2014, will we be closer to being free of Trident if we vote yes to better together, or if we vote to be able to make the decision for ourselves? I ask members to support my amendment.

16:33

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** The debate has been emotionally highly charged, which was predictable because the issue of nuclear weapons does not permit ambivalence. My opponents might be surprised to hear me say, on an issue of such magnitude, that robustness in the views of both sides of the argument is important. I say that because the debate must never become static or atrophied. Indeed, I concede that the United Nations secretary

general's five-point plan is an important contribution to the debate.

During my lifetime, I have seen a major change in attitude to nuclear armaments. Historically, over centuries, defence strategy has depended on outthinking, outsmarting and outequipping the enemy.

In any debate on defence, there will be a viewpoint that considers war to be unjustifiable in any circumstances. Although I respect that opinion, I cannot agree with it. The ancient Roman writer Vegetius said:

*"Igitur qui desiderat pacem, praeparet bellum."*

Who desires peace, let him prepare for war. Time and again, history has demonstrated the wisdom of that observation. Of course, every alternative option should be explored before that decision of last resort but, in the face of implacable evil, war is the last resort.

In any debate on nuclear weapons, I accept that there are, among the opponents of such weapons, many people who accept the need on occasion for war, but cannot accept the justification for that weapon of last resort. Again, I understand that position; I respect that opinion, but I do not agree with it.

If debate is not about exploring why people hold views and about subjecting those views to examination, debate is sterile. Part of that examination is to discover whether there is any conjunction of sentiment and, if there is, to clarify where there is a divergence of opinion.

So—let me introduce what may be an unexpected contribution. If I am asked, "Do you instinctively like nuclear weapons?" No, I do not. If I am asked, "Do you think that they have an awesome capacity to destroy?" Yes, I do. If I am asked, "Do you feel that their cost is troublingly expensive?" Yes, I think that it is. If there were a march tomorrow to support multilateral nuclear disarmament, would I be on it? Yes, I would, and so would many others in this chamber.

**Keith Brown:** Will Annabel Goldie give way?

**Annabel Goldie:** I will just make this point.

What, then, separates me from those who seek unilateral disarmament? We both want the same things: peace and stability. That is the nub of the debate. I believe that the fundamental principles that are relevant to nuclear deterrence have not changed since the end of the cold war and are, sadly, unlikely to change in the near future.

"Deterrence" is the key word. Mr Brown neither considered nor engaged in that debate and—to my disappointment—nor did his colleagues. To be fair, Mr Biagi tried to, but did not address the matter of deterring illegal nuclear developments.

The fact is that since acquiring that deterrent, we have had four decades of non-nuclear conflict. What we all want to achieve, which is multilateral disarmament, cannot be negotiated from a position of weakness. It does not work that way.

**Keith Brown:** Annabel Goldie said:

*"Who desires peace, let him prepare for war."*

What is the logical extension of that argument? If every country builds for war and uses nuclear weapons as part of that construction, where does that lead us?

**Annabel Goldie:** It is in my opinion simply self-evident, in relation to the general strategy of having defence capability, that it is a foolish nation that does not accept that, at times, the only way to deal with implacable evil is to be prepared to defend the position of the country and its citizens.

On negotiation, it is precisely because of their destructive powers—as Ruth Davidson said, the "uniquely terrible threat" that nuclear weapons pose—that they have the capability to deter acts of aggression. That scale of deterrence is completely different from that of any other form of deterrence.

**Jean Urquhart:** Will Annabel Goldie take an intervention?

**Annabel Goldie:** I want to make progress with my point.

That is why I believe that unilateralism, however well intended that view is and however sincerely it is held, will achieve the exact opposite of peace and stability. It will destroy any capacity to negotiate and will weaken the momentum for multilateral disarmament. It will give succour to the aggressive, the acquisitive and the despot who are nuclear armed, and it will make the world a more dangerous place.

I profoundly disagree with those who argue that removing Trident from Scotland will somehow make Scotland safer. If their proposition is, "If we don't have nuclear weapons here, no one will attack us", I have to say that from the perspective of any hostile aggressor on the impact of such a nuclear strike, the United Kingdom and France, which have nuclear weapons, have one and the same geography as Scotland. Perversely, we remain safer by retaining Trident at Faslane; the removal argument is spurious.

For the communities of Helensburgh and Dunbartonshire and their local economies, precipitate removal of Trident from Faslane would have a disastrous effect; Jackie Baillie made the point eloquently. Kenneth Gibson made a characteristically robust and, at times, provocative contribution. However, the response from his friends in these seats was nothing compared to the response that he got at the public meeting in

Helensburgh, where his remarks cut no ice whatever.

We all aspire to a world that is free of nuclear weapons. The only way to achieve that is to work proactively, vigorously and with commitment to expanding and enhancing the non-proliferation treaty. The UK has an excellent track record in that respect, which is why I feel that unilateralism would be an absolute gift to any rogue nation or hostile power that was developing illegal nuclear capacity. That is why I support the amendment in the name of Ruth Davidson and oppose the Scottish Government's motion.

16:40

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** There have been a number of passionate and thoughtful contributions to the debate, although I would not include Kenneth Gibson's contribution in that description.

I detect a universal view that the world would be a better place without nuclear weapons. The fact is that we cannot put the clock back and uninvent nuclear weapons. Since the first use of atomic weapons in July 1945, that genie has been out of the bottle. A nuclear-missile submarine deterrent has been in operation continuously since 1968—initially with Polaris and then with Trident. It is agreed across the chamber that no matter what our views are, we should at least continue to work hard for multilateral disarmament, which has already achieved a 75 per cent reduction in our nuclear arsenal and that of others.

Under the strategic defence and security review 10, there will be further progress. The UK has reduced its nuclear warheads from 360 to 160 and, under Labour, we withdrew the WE177 capability. If Britain did not have nuclear weapons, I would not advocate our acquiring them, but history has bestowed them upon us. I would echo the words of Gerald Kaufman MP, who said:

"I say clearly that I do not want nuclear weapons; I am not happy we have got them, but we have got them. Divesting ourselves of our nuclear weapons would be regarded by many as an act of self-indulgence."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 17 January 2013; Vol 556, c 1113.]

**Mark McDonald:** The member said that he, like the SNP, seeks nuclear disarmament. Why does his party portray the SNP as being the only party that threatens jobs at Faslane if he too wishes to see the end of nuclear weapons there?

**Dr Simpson:** We should move towards nuclear disarmament, but there is a difference between nuclear submarines and nuclear missiles. His party appears to want to get rid of both. The basing of the Astute class and the Vanguard class,

if it is finally proceeded with, will mean that the submarines will be based there—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order. Let us hear the member.

**Dr Simpson:** The submarines will be based there, except under an independent Scotland.

In 2009, President Obama said:

"The threat of global war has gone down but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up."

The 2006 white paper "The Future of the UK's Nuclear Deterrent" posited three scenarios. The first is the re-emergence of a major nuclear threat, which is possible but—I hope—unlikely. The second is of states' newly acquiring nuclear capability; we have discussed generally the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. The third scenario is of state-sponsored nuclear terrorism. The white paper states that

"We make no distinction between the means by which a state might choose to deliver a nuclear warhead ... whether by missile or by sponsored terrorists",

and goes on to say that a state identified as "the source of material" could expect a proportional response.

In other words, deterrence, which has always been at the core of our nuclear programme, remains an important fact that is completely denied by the SNP. They did not even discuss the question of deterrence, which I think continues to be important.

History teaches us that major wars tend to start when dictators believe that democracies are too weak to stand up to them. The assurance that mutual deterrence provided in preventing the cold war from becoming hot is a lesson from the past that should be recognised and not lost on us. The reality is that it is not the weapons themselves that we have to fear, but the nature of the regimes that possess them.

**Mark McDonald:** Will the member give way?

**Dr Simpson:** I am sorry, but I must make progress.

Nuclear weapons can be controlled only through the non-proliferation treaties, which underpin the world's determination to block Iran and other countries from developing such weapons. Whereas democracies are reluctant to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear dictatorships, the reverse is, I believe, unlikely to be true. No quantity of the conventional forces that were espoused largely by SNP members can compensate for the military disadvantage that would face a non-nuclear country in a war with a nuclear state.

On funding, no decision has as yet been made on the replacement of the D5 Trident missile, which will continue in operation until 2042. In the meantime, the review that is seeking a cost-effective alternative, which has been progressed by the Cabinet under Liberal Democrat pressure, continues.

**Keith Brown:** Will Dr Simpson give way?

**Dr Simpson:** No. I am sorry, but I must make a little more progress.

Let us assume that RUK—the rest of the United Kingdom—proceeded to the main-gate decision in 2016. It would then have to bear the additional cost that would have been our share, which would be an additional £2.5 billion. Would the rest of the United Kingdom thank Scotland for the higher share of the costs of Trident? Indeed, if, as members have suggested today, the rest of the UK was forced into unilateral disarmament by an inability to house the submarine fleet with its missiles elsewhere in the United Kingdom, would the rest of the United Kingdom thank us for that? That would come on top of the fact that independence would force us to pay additional costs, due to the loss of the European Union rebate, of £3.2 billion. What would the SNP's negotiating position be with the rest of the United Kingdom if we were forcing it to bear those additional costs?

A central theme in our concerns today has been that the SNP has reversed its stance on NATO. How could an independent Scotland shelter under a NATO nuclear umbrella after declaring unilateral independence with no nuclear weapons? It seems to me that applying for membership on that basis, in the negotiations after independence, would be quite hypocritical. As one commentator has pointed out, that would be like joining a golf club on the basis that the other members agree to play only with their putters. The SNP's position is hypocritical, and I applaud the stance of Jean Urquhart and others who have made that point very strongly.

Another question is whether the First Minister has another secret set of legal advice on the issue. Would the SNP be accepted into the NATO alliance swiftly after declaring independence, or is that something else that we would need to negotiate—negotiating on the basis that we would force NATO to remove its nuclear weapons? Would we disallow nuclear weapons from our territorial waters? Again, that seems to me to be quite ridiculous and hypocritical.

**The Presiding Officer:** Dr Simpson, you must bring your remarks to a close.

**Dr Simpson:** I think that I am in my last 30 seconds.

On the savings from cancelling Trident, Ruth Davidson eloquently expressed the SNP's repeated use of those savings. The money could be spent only once.

On jobs, Jackie Baillie made the case that it is quite clear that, under independence, the base at Faslane would be far smaller.

The central theme is that this Parliament should get back to debating the issues that are within our scope. This week, we should have been debating press regulation, but our offer on that was rejected. We should have been talking about ameliorating the bedroom tax. Those are the issues—

**Kevin Stewart:** Those issues are reserved.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Stewart! That is enough.

**Dr Simpson:** Those are the issues that this Parliament should be addressing; we should not be talking about the issues that are under debate, which do not fall within our purview.

I rest my case.

**The Presiding Officer:** I will not have members shouting across the chamber. If you want to make an intervention, do so but do not shout like that again.

I call Keith Brown to wind up the debate—you have 10 minutes.

16:49

**Keith Brown:** We have heard quite a wide range of views during the debate, and I will try to respond to as many points as I can. There were quite thoughtful contributions from Claudia Beamish and Annabel Goldie, but for me the stand-out speeches were from Bill Kidd and, especially, Marco Biagi, who gave an excellent speech in support of his views.

Before I address the points that were made during the debate, I would like to reflect briefly on what has become the inescapable consensus; that nuclear weapons are the single most destructive force in the world today and that we would all, without exception, welcome their abolition.

That alone should compel us to do all that we can to support the conditions for their removal, whatever our views may be on the length and nature of that journey. To those who question our competence in debating the issue, I say simply—as I said when first I spoke—that the vast majority of people in Scotland vehemently oppose nuclear weapons. The vast majority of—in fact, all the nuclear weapons in the UK, are in Scotland. Of course it is competent and right that this chamber discuss that.

Jackie Baillie in particular derided the use of Parliament's time in debating the issue, although she discussed everything apart from Trident, which is under debate. In my time in local government I went to many meetings with Labour councillors at various councils across the country at which we discussed nuclear-free zones, issues to do with Palestine and all sorts of matters for which councils have no responsibility but which they felt were very important. That debate was not opposed by the Labour Party at that time. It would be well for the Labour Party to look back—

**Malcolm Chisholm:** This is the first debate on Trident that has been called by the Government in the best part of six years. Does the minister not understand that people are genuinely angry that the debate comes this week, after the debate on Iraq and before the statement on the date of the referendum? The timing of the debate, the wording of the motion and the substance of the speeches have tied this subject, as far as the SNP is concerned, into the whole argument about independence. That is deeply regrettable and it is why nobody in this chamber will support Keith Brown's motion, except those who support independence.

**Keith Brown:** On Malcolm Chisholm's point about the wording of the motion, I would like to know what he and the Labour Party find so offensive about acknowledging the devastating humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, about endorsing the United Nations secretary general's five-point plan or about acknowledging the opposition of the Scottish Parliament to nuclear weapons. What is so objectionable about those points?

The Labour Party should survey the wreckage of its 2011 election campaign and ponder where its blind hatred of the SNP has taken it.

First, we heard people who were for many years involved with CND—an honourable cause—being denigrated as delusional. That was from Michael McMahon. We have heard people being described as “naive” or “cynical” because they oppose nuclear weapons. Michael McMahon still thinks that that is the case. Labour might like to ponder the fact that it denigrates—

**Michael McMahon:** Will the minister give way?

**Keith Brown:** No, I will not take an intervention. Labour might want to ponder the fact that it denigrates people who have supported it. What about the Labour MP Joan Ruddock, long-time member and leader of CND? Was she delusional as well? That is how the Labour Party has got itself into the position that it is in now.

Stewart Stevenson made a telling contribution when he talked about the real costs of Trident—what we are paying for Trident currently and what

we are being asked to pay in terms of the equipment that is being foregone by troops on the ground; he mentioned helicopters and boots in particular. When the Prime Minister dropped by my street one day, I challenged him on that very issue of helicopters and equipment. He did not really give me an answer and it ended up in a bit of a rammie, if I can call it that. The simple fact is that the Labour Party is all over the place on the issue—as, I think, Kenny Gibson said. It will be interesting to see what it does in a few minutes, when we come to the vote. Will there be another abstemious action by the Labour Party, in which it will not vote? In the same way, it abstained from supporting the Tories in the vote on workfare in the House of Commons yesterday—the Tories' dirty little helpers.

It is also very telling that none of the Opposition spokespeople—Ken Macintosh, and Ruth Davidson, who was asked—could come up with a scenario in which they would use the £100 billion-worth of weapons that they want to procure for this country and site in Scotland.

On the matter of Labour deriding its own history, Jim Murphy derided those who said they were against nuclear weapons and had supported CND in the past as “flirting with surrealism”. That is what he said about people who genuinely believed in the Labour Party and in unilateral nuclear disarmament. We heard more “flirting with surrealism” this afternoon, when Richard Simpson decided to compare nuclear weapons with not putters, but drivers in a golf bag. That was surreal—I have no idea what he was talking about. His suggestion—that we would restrict ourselves to using only putters, rather than using the drivers or the woods that he equates with nuclear weapons—was “flirting with surrealism”.

We have set out the reasons why we believe the motion should be agreed to by Parliament. I cannot for the life of me think why any part of the motion—despite what Malcolm Chisholm said—might prove to be impossible for the Labour Party to support. Malcolm Chisholm might quibble with the timing of the debate, but it is only the SNP that has previously brought the issue to Parliament, in 2007 and 2008. His party has had the chance to do that at any time, if its members had felt as strongly about the subject as they say they do, but it has not done so. Today, Labour members have denied that we should ever debate the subject, so how can we be criticised for the timing? There is no reason why the Labour Party and those who genuinely wish nuclear weapons to be taken away from Scotland cannot easily support our motion.

An interesting question about the Labour Party's position is this: Where is it showing leadership? Its leader is not even here. She is meant to be in charge of all the Labour MSPs and all the Labour

MPs in Scotland, and she is meant to speak for the Labour Party, but she is not even here. I am willing to take an intervention from any Labour member who can tell me what Johann Lamont's position is on the replacement of Trident.

It is our priority, as good global citizens, to support and promote global nuclear disarmament. That is the right thing to do.

**Ken Macintosh** rose—

**Keith Brown:** I will give way to Ken Macintosh—if he can tell me what the views of his leader are on the replacement of Trident. Over to you, Ken.

**Ken Macintosh:** Those views were laid out to the SNP in a letter, which offered to give up our debating time to debate Trident if the SNP would debate an issue of the day—the Leveson report. Why did the SNP not use its time to debate Leveson this week?

**Keith Brown:** The SNP chooses what it wants to use its time for, and likewise the Labour Party chooses. The Labour Party could have chosen to discuss Trident at any time, but it has not done so. That speaks volumes.

We await the outcome of the Trident alternatives review, which is being led by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. We hope that the review explores options that do not rely on the continued use of HMNB Clyde as the UK's nuclear deterrent base. On the subject of the base, the most distasteful part of the entire debate has been the moral bankruptcy of Jackie Baillie. She said that it is worth protecting jobs at Faslane only if we spend hundreds of billions of pounds on nuclear weapons. There is no moral case for that. It is reprehensible to try to equate the two things.

We ask for Parliament's support on the motion, although we have always realised that there would be convinced opposition to it. The Conservatives have possibly held a consistent position, as has been mentioned, but there is no consistency in the Labour Party position. Labour members have the chance to remedy that, however, by supporting the motion.

I conclude with a point that was made by President Barack Obama.

**The Presiding Officer:** You may continue until 4.59.

**Keith Brown:** I refer to the words of Barack Obama, who made a very famous speech, of course. It is worth bearing in mind that he is President of the country that has the biggest nuclear arsenal in the world, and even he seems to realise the dangers. He said:

"So long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them."

I was trying to make this point before: it is very hard for one state to have the moral authority to tell another state that it cannot have nuclear weapons because it is not responsible, but for that state to say that it is responsible. We cannot do that—that is moral hypocrisy.

President Obama said:

"So long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, it defies credibility that they will not one day be used, by accident, miscalculation or design."

Rob Gibson made some telling points about some of the accidents that we have suffered here in Scotland involving nuclear submarines around our shores.

President Obama went on to say about nuclear weapons:

"any such use would be catastrophic. It is sheer luck that the world has escaped such catastrophe until now."

That is not entirely true, of course: as we know, two nuclear explosions happened in Japan already. It is also worth pointing out—to rebut the point that we should not discuss such issues—that this Parliament has debated the effects of nuclear weapon tests on our citizens. We debated that with all-party support, I think. If we can discuss testing of nuclear weapons, why cannot we discuss Trident, too?

The Scottish Government believes that the moral, economic, strategic and democratic case for withdrawal of Trident nuclear weapons is clear, and that the time is now right to bring new momentum to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. I call on the Scottish Parliament—on all those who have a conscience in relation to this—to send a clear, strong and positive message to the UK Government and the international community by supporting the motion.

## Business Motions

16:59

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-5994, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 26 March 2013

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Forth Road Bridge Bill

*followed by* Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee Debate: Reports on Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting our Emissions Reduction Targets 2013-2027: The Draft Second Report on Proposals and Policies

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

6.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 27 March 2013

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Infrastructure, Investment and Cities;  
Culture and External Affairs

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Financial Resolution: Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 28 March 2013

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Stage 3 Proceedings: High Hedges (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 16 April 2013

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 17 April 2013

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Education and Lifelong Learning

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 18 April 2013

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-05995, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for Thursday 21 March 2013. Any member who wishes to speak against the motion should press their request-to-speak button. I call Joe FitzPatrick to move the motion.

17:00

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** In moving the motion, Presiding Officer, I confirm that this revision allows for a historic statement on Scotland's independence referendum tomorrow.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 21 March 2013—

delete

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions



2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's  
Financial Strength

and insert

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Ministerial Statement: Scotland's  
Independence Referendum 2014

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scotland's  
Financial Strength

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-05996, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a stage 1 timetable for the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 17 May 2013—[Joe FitzPatrick]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions, S4M-05997 and S4M-05998, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Valuation (Postponement of Revaluation) (Scotland) Order 2013 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Budget (Scotland) Act 2012 Amendment Order 2013 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The question on the motions will be put at decision time.

## Decision Time

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are five questions to be put as a result of today's business. I remind members that, in relation to today's debate on Trident, if the amendment in the name of Ruth Davidson is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Jean Urquhart will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-05988.2, in the name of Ruth Davidson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-05988, in the name of Keith Brown, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

### Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 12, Against 67, Abstentions 30.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-05988.1, in the name of Jean Urquhart, which seeks to amend motion S4M-05988, in the name of Keith Brown, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**Abstentions**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 1, Against 75, Abstentions 33.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-05988, in the name of Keith Brown, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**Against**

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

**Abstentions**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 61, Against 16, Abstentions 31.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament acknowledges the devastating humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons; endorses the Secretary-General of the United Nations's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament; calls on the UK Government to acknowledge the opposition of the Scottish Parliament to nuclear weapons and to the presence of Trident in Scotland, and further calls on the UK Government to explore options for the removal of Trident ahead of the so-called main gate decision in 2016.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-05997, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Valuation (Postponement of Revaluation) (Scotland) Order 2013 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-05998, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Budget (Scotland) Act 2012 Amendment Order 2013 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** That concludes decision time. Members leaving the chamber should do so quickly and quietly.

## Dementia Carers' Voices

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S4M-05522, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on dementia carers' voices. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament understands that there are currently 84,000 people in Scotland living with dementia, a figure that is expected to double over the next 25 years; acknowledges that caring for someone with dementia can be a difficult experience; values the contribution made by families and carers of people with dementia in the Dumbarton constituency and across Scotland who, on a daily basis, provide support to loved ones with the illness; recognises the importance of carer support and respite where appropriate; notes the importance of raising awareness of dementia and ensuring that people with dementia are treated with dignity and respect, and welcomes the work of a number of key stakeholders and organisations who give a platform to the views and experiences of carers of people with dementia across Scotland including the Health and Social Care Alliance's Dementia Carer Voices Project and Alzheimer Scotland's National Dementia Carers Action Network.

17:07

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I think that members will agree that there should be a welcome change of tone in this debate.

I consider myself extremely privileged to lead this debate on dementia carers. Let me start by acknowledging and welcoming the support for this issue that exists across all parties in the Parliament, as is evidenced by the members who have remained in the chamber this evening. I also very much want to welcome to the public gallery Tommy Whitelaw, whose work—and his journey with his mother Joan—led to the Scottish Government providing funding for the dementia carers' voices project.

The dementia carers' voices project recognises the central importance of the carer's voice in informing the future shape of services and in ensuring that the needs of carers are recognised in that process. Members will recall that, almost two years ago, Tommy Whitelaw started his tour of towns and cities across Scotland—walking much of the way, I suspect—to raise awareness both of the impact of dementia on families and of the difficult but vital role that is played by carers.

I never met Tommy's mum, but I know that she was not defined by her dementia. She was a daughter, a sister, a wife, a friend, a workmate, a neighbour and a valued member of her community. I know that she was a much loved mother and, clearly, a very special lady. Tommy was at his mum's side when she received her

diagnosis of dementia, but they went home without support. At a later stage of her condition, they were told that there was not much more that could be done and it was time to consider residential care. For much of their journey in dealing with dementia, they did not have access to a wide range of support. Certainly, there was little support for Tommy himself to help with the isolation and loneliness that he felt as a carer, which I know is felt by many carers in my constituency and throughout Scotland.

Despite the much-lauded carer and dementia strategies that successive Governments have put in place, the experience of Tommy and Joan is repeated by other people. We know that from the stories that Tommy has collected and continues to collect, which are at the heart and foundation of the dementia carers' voices project.

Something is not working well at a local level. There is a postcode lottery of care, some of which involves gaps in health provision and some of which is about differences in services between local authority areas. However, irrespective of where the problem lies, the challenge for us in this chamber is to ensure that the best possible standard of care is provided wherever someone lives in the country.

In that regard, the dementia carers' voices project will be not only helpful but extremely useful to the Government because it will use the stories that Tommy has collected on his journey to shape thinking about services, which I hope the Government will take and use; highlight the role and importance of carers, which I know the Parliament recognises; and consider how we empower carers by using the charter of rights for people with dementia. I think that virtually every member in the chamber signed up to the charter, but it is not yet real.

We need to ensure that the isolation and loneliness that Tommy experienced is not felt by others and that there is a much better understanding of dementia and the carer's journey among health and social care professionals. Important and helpful messages are already emerging, and I think that we should learn from them now rather than simply wait until the end of the project. One of the messages is that we do not currently ask about the person inside the dementia, but if we are to provide the best possible person-centred care we need to know about their lives, about what they do and do not like, and about them as individuals so that we can put the individual very much at the centre of their care.

We know, because carers tell us, that there is no consistency of care staff, and yet we know that familiarity and a routine is so important to somebody with dementia. We heard a story from a

carer in the Highlands—I think—about someone having 104 different care staff in a short space of time. That is not the way in which we want to treat people with dementia. We also find experiences in the project that suggest that people need a friend and somebody to talk to who has been there before as a carer—that is something quite simple. Above all, there is the whole question of awareness.

I will give members just a couple of quotes from carers who described to Tommy the issue for their becoming aware of services and being able to access them. One said that it is

"like trying to crack a secret code."

Another one said that it is

"like trying to break MI5."

That should not be the case; we should be much more engaged in providing information to people. Another carer said:

"I now know that help is there but you have to know where to look, no one comes to you with information or instructions."

Some of that is easy to resolve.

I very much welcome the Scottish Government's guarantee of at least a year's worth of post-diagnostic support, which I think will be helpful in changing the landscape. It has huge potential to assist people and to prevent carers from falling into crisis situations. It would be significant if the minister could signal that the support will be implemented in all care settings, including care homes and continuing care. There are 86,000 people who have already been diagnosed who might not have access to that kind of support. I strongly urge the minister to ensure that they are included.

All members in the chamber recognise the importance of carers and the amount that they save the state. There are good strategies in place, but it is evident from the experience of Tommy on his tour that we need to do so much more. I commend Tommy's journey to members because what he has done is critically important for informing us what is truly happening out there. Let us use his journey as a driver for change.

17:14

**Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** It is traditional to thank and congratulate the member who brought the subject of a members' business debate to the chamber. In so congratulating Jackie Baillie, I would like to add a few personal thanks of my own.

I thank the Bearsden resource centre of Alzheimer Scotland. On a personal level, the staff there have supported me in my journey as a carer,

and the carers group that they hold on a Tuesday evening is incredibly important to my constituents.

I also thank Tommy Whitelaw, whose journey has very much reflected mine. I will try hard not to cry at this point, because the first two times I met Tommy he moved me to tears. When he came to Parliament in 2011 to present to Nicola Sturgeon—then the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy—the letters that he had collected on his journey, I ended up crying in a toilet because I had become quite upset. On our second meeting, a few weeks later, when Tommy came along to talk to the annual general meeting of Carers Link East Dunbartonshire, I once again ended up crying in a toilet, because it is incredibly difficult, emotionally, to read those letters and hear about the difficult journey that people who care for people with dementia go on. I think that my getting upset at the time had to do with the fact that, at that point, I was at a difficult place in my personal journey as a carer, which is no longer the case.

My third meeting with Tommy was much more joyous. It was in Bellahouston park, on a sponsored walk that had been organised by Kris Rodden who works for the Bearsden resource centre of Alzheimer Scotland. I went along with my Dalmatian, Rhona, and we had a nice day out.

Those thanks from me are personal. However, as the MSP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, I say that looking after and supporting people who care for people with dementia is incredibly important. It is estimated that, by 2035, the number of people aged 75 and above in Bearsden will have risen by 88 per cent, from 9,000 today to more than 17,000. Given that more than 6 per cent of people aged over 75, and 20 per cent of those in their late 80s, are likely to have dementia, it is clear that a lot of people in my constituency will be caring for a lot of people with dementia.

That support for carers is absolutely vital. Someone who cares for someone with dementia is often that person's voice, as they are the one who can delve inside and remember what the person with dementia would want to happen, even though they cannot say what it is.

Carers Link supported me as a carer and also had the courage to employ me as a peer support worker for nine months. Carers Link supports 932 carers. In recent years, it has realised that 44 per cent of those carers look after someone with dementia. Already, in my constituency, we can see the numbers rising.

I want to highlight Carers Link's day cafe, where people who are caring for folk with dementia can come together every month to get support from each other and learn from each other's journeys.

I will conclude by making a suggestion that I have made before during debates on dementia

carers. We have talked about creating a card that young carers can use, because it is often difficult for a young carer to be recognised as such. Once again, I suggest that we have a dementia carers card because, no matter how many times I turned up in the accident and emergency ward, waving my power of attorney, I was not always recognised as the voice of the person who could not answer for themselves, especially in an accident and emergency situation. A wee card that says "I am caring for this person with dementia" would perhaps give us a bit more access to health professionals.

17:19

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I congratulate Jackie Baillie on securing debating time for this important issue. I commend Irene Oldfather for the immense amount of work that she did as a member of this Parliament to raise awareness of dementia, and for her continuing commitment to all those who live with dementia, and their carers, in her new role with the Health and Social Care Alliance, as programme director of the dementia carers' voices project.

While preparing for the debate, I found myself travelling far down memory lane to the days—which must now be more than 60 years ago—when my granny stayed with us for the last two years of her life. Granny was fondly described as a bit "dottled". She treated me as one of her school pals, entertained the family with her favourite songs from the past and, once, embarrassed us hugely when she walked into the house where she lived as a child and told the current occupant in no uncertain terms that she had no business being there.

I remember the funnier incidents from granny's final years, but I was quite unaware of the stress that her dementia caused to my parents—particularly my mother, who had to cope with regularly soiled bedding and clothes at a time when easy care materials and washing machines were not available, while trying to keep granny happily entertained and safe. That included making copious amounts of tea and snacks for the many visits from her large family, most of whom were quite content to sit and chat and leave mum to do all the work.

All of that was against a background of very little sleep, because granny regularly got up at night to collect her young laddies from school. To cope with that, my mother slept with her with the bedroom key hidden under her pillow. I do not remember where dad slept, but probably on a sofa in the living room—all that for two whole years.

In those days, there was no recognition of carers and no organisation to give support or

advice, just the occasional chastisement of some family members by the general practitioner, who recognised that my mother's own health was suffering from hard work, sleeplessness and lack of practical support.

Thankfully, things are improving for carers, but there are still many people in Scotland who look after loved ones with dementia without recognition or proper support. That is why projects such as dementia carers' voices are so important because they raise awareness of the impact of dementia on the families affected by it and of the difficult but vital role played by the carers of the 86,000 people currently living with dementia. That figure is already up from 72,000 two years ago, and it is set to double over the next 25 years as the population gets older.

The unremitting commitment by Alzheimer Scotland and the cross-party group led by Irene Oldfather when she was an MSP to help people with dementia and their carers led to the development of a charter of rights for those people, which was followed by the dementia strategy published by the Scottish Government in 2010. That recognised the need for quality support and information to be made available immediately after diagnosis, for better understanding of dementia by health and social care professionals in both hospital and community settings, and for better planning for discharge back into the community aimed at delaying the need for residential care through improved home care and support.

As we all know from our work locally, three years on there are still many people who do not receive the community support that they need and are entitled to, with delayed assessments and unreliable provision of home care. We all hope that the developing integration of adult health and social care will improve the situation for those not adequately provided for.

The efforts of Tommy Whitelaw, following the death of his mother from dementia, have built up a large body of evidence from people who have cared for relatives with dementia, illustrating the problems that they have faced—from isolation and the emotional rollercoaster of the caring experience, to health, housing and financial worries. His work has led to a recognition of the importance of the voice of the carer to inform future service provision and to empower carers. Like Jackie Baillie, I sincerely congratulate him.

If the project leads to a better understanding of dementia and its related issues among health and social care professionals, an increased awareness of carer rights, better support and information on sources of help, and less isolation of carers, it will have been very worth while indeed. I commend

the project and Jackie Baillie for bringing it to our notice.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Before I call John Pentland, I am minded, due to the number of members who still wish to speak in the debate, to accept a motion that the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

*Motion moved,*

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

*Motion agreed to.*

17:24

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab):** The statistics on dementia tell only part of the story. We also need to hear the personal experiences of those with dementia and the carers and families who support them. That is why the project is so valuable and why I thank Jackie Baillie for lodging the motion. I also thank Tommy Whitelaw, the dementia carers' voices champion, and others who provide a platform for carers' views on the work that they are doing.

I recently met people with dementia and their carers in my constituency when I attended a living well with dementia cafe that meets monthly at Motherwell Football Club's Fir Park stadium with the aim of raising awareness of dementia in the community. It is a fantastic service that provides a regular meeting point for people with dementia and Alzheimer's and their carers, giving them the opportunity to meet healthcare professionals and stakeholders in dementia care to discuss any concerns that they have. I was struck by the activity that the cafe brings to the community. I am certain that the vibrancy of that meeting made people feel welcome, comforted and understood. No one was excluded, and staff did an excellent job in providing reassurance and advice to all 60 people who attended. The service is invaluable to our community. With the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's and dementia, it is vital that people do not feel alone in their concerns. We need many more such services.

Hearing what my constituents had to say made it clear to me that we need to enhance the services that are available to support them and to look carefully at the Scottish Government's policy on the development of those services. Carers—whether of people with dementia or people who require care for other reasons—contribute an enormous amount to society, but that contribution is not easy to measure and is not generally recognised by the bean counters, statisticians and economists. It is only when we look at what it would cost the state to provide the support that they give—about £10 billion for the Scottish economy—that we realise just how much we are



in their debt. The health services and central and local government should take that on board in their policy making and activities.

Dementia carers and other carers deserve a network of support that can address their specific needs, whether from day to day or in a crisis. They need to know how and where to get help, and that help must be available when it is needed. They need support in maintaining their own health under the pressures of caring, and they need support as they struggle with fuel and food poverty. The 250,000 carers who work need the understanding and support of their employers so that they can combine work with their caring responsibilities, and young carers need the support of their schools and colleges as they combine study with their caring role.

I welcome the project, which is contributing to meeting that need through visits, talks, publications and social and other media. The project also makes clear the need for those providing services to know more about the person with dementia and the linked need for consistency in who provides the services. I thank the project for delivering those messages and sincerely hope that they are taken on board.

17:28

**Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP):** I congratulate Jackie Baillie on securing a members' business slot to bring this important topic to the chamber and I pay tribute to the contributions that have been made so far by Fiona McLeod, in particular, and John Pentland.

We cannot underestimate the size of the challenge that Scotland faces from dementia. As Jackie Baillie has pointed out, it is expected that the number of people suffering from dementia will double in the next 25 years. Alzheimer's Scotland predicts that, by 2031, there will be 127,000 dementia sufferers in Scotland. Any mental illness is challenging to deal with, not least for the sufferers but also for those who care for them—doctors, husbands, wives, children, parents, partners, friends or neighbours. Given its prevalence among the elderly, in particular, dementia poses a whole extra set of difficulties for both sufferers and carers.

Carers are the unpaid army of volunteers without whom we simply could not ensure that those with dementia get the support and attention that they deserve. Testament to that were the diverse stories and experiences that we learned about when people from all walks of society came to speak in the carers Parliament a few months ago, including some from my constituency who have sacrificed careers to the greater need of looking after family members.

My 92-year-old mother is a dementia sufferer who can live at home with my 90-year-old father only because of the network of support that she has from great care assistants and family members.

Dementia is a real issue for all classes of people from all backgrounds. It knows no boundaries. I pay tribute to the work of volunteers such as Tommy Whitelaw and to the new dementia carers project. I recognise that Irene Oldfather has a major contribution to make outwith the Parliament and I wish her well.

It is clear that providing the services and frameworks that our health service and unpaid carers need to cope with the effects of dementia has been a priority for the Scottish Government since 2007, but much more needs to be done. As a recent report by Alzheimer Scotland said, service provision needs to be consistent at all times and in all places, not least in increasing the availability of specialist day care that is suited to dementia sufferers; increasing training for professional home carers and allowing them more contact hours with dementia patients; and improving respite options, among other things. If we can build on that, we will improve the lot not only of sufferers but of the spouses, children, friends and neighbours who care for their loved ones.

Respite is a key issue for carers. We need to be clear that respite care does not have to mean sending a sufferer to a care home overnight. Respite can be delivered in the home environment, too. We need to accept that dementia sufferers and carers often very much appreciate the relatively low levels of stress that are involved when respite is delivered in a familiar setting with minimal disruption to the lives of sufferers and carers, which is of paramount importance in dementia care.

Respite outside care homes accounted for only 2.2 per cent of all respite nights for the over-65s in Fife in 2006-07. That figure is very low, and there certainly seems to be scope for replicating the much higher figures in East Ayrshire and Inverclyde, where approximately one quarter and one fifth respectively of all respite nights are provided outside care homes. I hope that we can do more to end that lottery across the country.

I hope that the Scottish Government's next dementia strategy, which will apply for the next three years—until 2016—will be as innovative as the previous one. We need to maintain the dialogue with all carers, such as Tommy Whitelaw; with patients; with stakeholders, such as Alzheimer Scotland; and with others, such as Professor June Andrews, whom I was fortunate to visit at her base at the University of Stirling a couple of months ago.

We need to build on things such as the strong diagnosis rate in Scotland, which is the highest in the UK, and we need to take on board the comments that Jackie Baillie made about that. We also need to meet the important HEAT—health improvement, efficiency and governance, access and treatment—target for post-diagnostic support.

From the draft strategy, I am convinced that the Scottish Government recognises the importance of the problem. In the whole problem, let us not forget the role of carers. Without carers, the consequences for wider society would be grave indeed.

17:33

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** I, too, congratulate Jackie Baillie on securing the debate. I welcome the opportunity to highlight the extraordinary work of Scotland's dementia carers.

There can be no doubt that the whole of Scotland owes a debt of gratitude to our carers. Daily, they selflessly care for the most vulnerable members of our society, for reasons of duty and love. It is estimated that Scotland's 657,300 carers provide annual savings of £10.3 billion. Of course, not all those carers provide support for dementia sufferers.

Dementia is a dreadful illness whose grip extends far beyond the sufferer who is afflicted by the disease. The illness tragically robs a family of the person whom they know and love long before death occurs. That makes the illness uniquely cruel; the loved one is still physically there but, mentally, they can no longer engage with people as they once could. I, too, know that—my father suffered from the illness and it was not until my mother passed away after a short battle with cancer that I realised that she had hidden his early dementia. That reflects what I think is meant by the stigma of dementia.

Dementia must always be viewed beyond the mental illness that attacks the sufferer's memory, because it also affects the sufferer's loved ones. In that environment, people's hearts break while they watch their loved ones deteriorate. A person's life is suspended while they act as their loved one's carer. That is the life for tens of thousands of people in Scotland who find themselves in that position on a daily basis.

Until the tragic death of his mother last year, Tommy Whitelaw was one of those carers. I want to pay my own tribute to him tonight. Tommy is an inspiration. Frankly, I do not know where he found his energy and drive to do his campaigning while caring for his mother, but I am glad that he did. I had been aware of Tommy's exploits from media coverage, but it was not until January this year that I had the pleasure of meeting him, thanks to

my old colleague and friend Irene Oldfather. He told me of his work with Alzheimer Scotland touring the country and collecting letters from other carers, of the short film that he had made to raise awareness about dementia and of his role as a carer for Joan. I was so moved by Tommy's experiences that I asked him to speak at my regional conference for Lib Dems last month. He is doing an incredible job raising the public's awareness about dementia, and I was honoured that he could join me at that conference. I am also pleased that he has joined us in the public gallery this evening.

The dedicated strategy for carers that the Scottish Government published in 2010 was a good start, particularly as local authorities and the third sector had the opportunity to inform the strategy. The meetings of the carers Parliament have been outstanding forums for discussing and raising awareness of the great job that is being done by carers. However, we must not be complacent. We should strive to build on that good work to strengthen further the support network that is afforded to all carers

I am glad that the Presiding Officer accepted the motion to extend the debate. That is quite a rare occasion, but it emphasises the issue's importance. Let me end not with my words but with Tommy's, from an interview that he did with the *Daily Record* as he embarked on his tour two years ago. When asked to describe the life of a full-time carer, he said:

"It's hard emotionally, mentally and financially and it can leave me feeling lonely."

He speaks there not just for himself but for all who have cared for parents and loved ones. Let us all work towards a Scotland in which no carer feels lonely.

17:37

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I am pleased to speak in this evening's debate and I congratulate Jackie Baillie on bringing forward the issue.

Dementia is a condition that impacts on many families and individuals across Scotland and one that is expected only to increase among the Scottish population. Those demands will impact on our health and social care services, so we must ensure that we develop services that will respond to those rising demands. When I met Royal College of Nursing clinical leaders from Fife in the Parliament a few weeks ago, they identified the growth in more complex health needs as one of the pressures facing the health service.

Of course, the issue is not just about our health service or the structure or frameworks that we create to work with dementia. What strikes me in

reading the briefing from Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland is the human response to dementia, how people are treated, how they are understood, how they are supported and how they are talked to. We can get the structures right, but how people are treated will be the key to a successful dementia strategy.

Carers must be at the heart of our strategy. With an estimated 86,000 people in Scotland living with dementia, there is an army of carers out there looking after their loved ones. That experience can be difficult and challenging—it is certainly exhausting—and is also an act of love and care. My family, like many across Scotland, has had the experience of caring for a family member at home with Alzheimer's. No one expects a medal or recognition for caring. Carers care from a sense of duty, because it seems like the right thing to do and because they feel that no one else will do it or because they worry that no one else will be able to provide the kind of care that they personally can provide. They may have 100 different reasons, but the heart of the matter is that they love the person that they care for.

Caring can take over the carer's life and become a 24-hour-a-day job. Someone may become a carer over a period of time, as a spouse or parent gradually becomes more dependent, or it may be a sudden change when a decision has to be taken about care and a relative moves into the family home. Some people make the decision to be a carer whereas, for others, particularly spouses, it can be a role that they just increasingly fulfil.

The Fife Carers Centre in Kirkcaldy, which offers support and advice, is supporting an increasing number of people all the time. That work should be recognised. Carers often worry about the person they care for, about the level of care that they are able to provide, about the treatment that the person will get from others, about the effect on the wider family and also about what will happen in future. That responsibility places a burden on carers that affects their physical, mental and emotional health. In addition, carers often experience added pressure on their finances, sometimes as a result of incurring extra expenses and sometimes as a result of their income being reduced because of a need to cut their working hours or give up work altogether.

Those are some of the reasons why the dementia carers' voices project is so valued. I welcome the extent to which the debate has recognised the work of Tommy Whitelaw, who has been raising awareness of the impact of dementia on families. The collection of life stories demonstrates that carers of people with dementia often feel isolated and that there is insufficient recognition of the complex issues that they have to

deal with, which range from legal and financial matters to health and housing. Those letters and stories are a valuable resource that should be used to inform future policy and service provision.

One of the identified outcomes of the project is to gather information that will support family and person-centred approaches to health and social care. The briefing that we have received makes it clear why that is important. Many of the carers' comments are about the person for whom they are caring not being recognised as a person—they express a feeling that the person inside the dementia is forgotten—and they call for greater recognition of the carer role among health and social care professionals. One carer described the need to recognise the value of the trust that the person with dementia has in the carer.

The letters that have been collected are powerful and are testimony to the valuable work that carers do across Scotland, but they are also about the human experience. Being a carer is not a job; it is about being part of a family. The letters demonstrate that, although people do it for the best of reasons, they cannot and should not have to do it alone.

17:41

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):**

I add my congratulations to Jackie Baillie on securing the debate. As members will be aware, dementia is an issue that is close to my heart—I will say more about that later. In addition, I have an interest in it as co-convener of the cross-party group on carers and of the cross-party group on dementia.

I met Tommy Whitelaw in June 2011—on my birthday—in Aberdeen's St Mary's cathedral. It was quite a birthday present, Tommy. It is good to see him here in Parliament today. While we were there, we spoke about his campaign and I shared with him my family's experience. My mother was carer to my grandparents. My grandmother had dementia for 11 years and lived with my mother in my mother's home for six of those years, along with my grandfather, although he passed away in 2010. My grandmother passed away in October 2011.

I agree with Jim Hume that dementia is a horrible, cruel illness. I have often said that my view is that dementia is an illness that kills a person from the inside out, in the sense that what you are left with is, essentially, a shell that looks very much like the person you know and love, but one from which the essence of that person, which made them the person you know and love, has long since disappeared, although occasional glimmers reappear. That was the case with my grandmother.

I am deviating from my notes, but what was interesting with my grandmother was the way in which she would react to my children and my brother's children—her great-grandchildren. She seemed to have an enormous affinity with babies and small children. She would always light up when they came to visit her, whereas she would treat my mother and her siblings as strangers, despite the fact that they were the children whom she had raised. I was always struck by that when I visited my grandmother.

I saw at first hand the many difficulties that my mother faced as a carer. In the initial stages, she tried to juggle sustaining employment with her caring responsibilities. Eventually, she had to leave her job and focus fully on caring. Difficulties are created by the pittance that carers receive as a carers allowance. Jim Hume mentioned the £10.3 billion annual savings that the state accrues as a result of carers doing what they do. Despite that, the Department for Work and Pensions deems it not to be a job and pays a pittance by way of the carers allowance. That is extremely regrettable, and it certainly does not help carers to do the very tough job that they do.

My mother received great support from Alzheimer Scotland throughout the process, for which she and my family remain grateful. Indeed, my mum is currently fundraising for Alzheimer Scotland, despite the fact that my grandmother has not been with us for more than a year, because we recognise the work that that organisation delivers across our communities.

Jackie Baillie mentioned a carer in the Highlands who had been assisted by 104 care staff. Using my Poirot-esque powers of deduction, I concluded that she was referring to Jeanette Maitland of Kingswells in Aberdeen, who had 106 carers visiting to attend to her husband. I met Mrs Maitland at a carers event in Aberdeen and visited her at her home to discuss the issues prior to their becoming public. Jackie Baillie's comments on that jogged my memory. That issue highlights the importance of continuity of care, particularly for individuals with dementia. One noticeable point is how such people react to familiarity and having the same person visiting them. Constant change upsets individuals with dementia, so it needs to be avoided.

It is important to ensure that adequate and appropriate support is in place for carers. I note from a briefing that was provided for the debate that three quarters of carers say that their health is worse because of their caring responsibilities. We must address that; otherwise the people who are today's carers will become the people who are tomorrow's cared for.

17:46

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate Jackie Baillie on bringing the motion to the Parliament's attention. I associate myself with members' comments about Irene Oldfather and Tommy Whitelaw.

A significant number of people in Scotland live with dementia, and the number is likely to increase. At the same time, there is a significant number of carers, who provide vital services to their loved ones and, as members have said, save the taxpayer significant sums of money.

I come from a fairly long-lived family. My grandmother was 95 when she died and her mother was 93. Uncommonly for someone of my age, I am lucky enough to still have both my parents alive, and very much so. I am even more fortunate in that I have never had to suffer the particular pain of watching a loved one succumb to dementia. Touch wood, but I have never had to suffer losing the person that I love while at the same time having to care for the person that they have become. I take my hat off to the members who have had to go through that experience. It is tragic that people who are suffering that bereavement have difficulty finding out about the condition from which their loved one is suffering or about services that are available to help them.

In October last year, I was honoured to accept an invitation to open Alzheimer Scotland's dementia resource centre in Gordon Street in Dumfries along with Mrs and Mr Crouch, a dementia sufferer and her carer. Mr Crouch described to me what the centre offered and how it gave him some respite while his wife enjoyed and benefited from the services. There is a day centre, access to a dementia adviser for carers and the award-winning fortnightly musical minds group, which has been so successful that it has had to move to larger premises and has recently set up a similar programme in Moffat. For those who prefer sport to music, there is a monthly football reminiscence club, members of which recently visited Alzheimer Scotland's national resource at Hampden, along with similar clubs from across Scotland.

The centre is decorated to a high standard, with objects and photographs that are designed to stimulate memory. In fact, my grandparents had possessed similar objects when I was a young girl, so they stimulated my memory, too. They included a stone hot-water bottle, which when I was a wee girl we always referred to as "the pig". I think that that was because it was cold. I do not know whether that was a particularly Fife expression, but my grandparents had one of those and I was excited to see it.

People with dementia and their carers can be supported in a number of ways. Some of them are fun and involve things such as sport and culture; others involve uplifting people even while suffering from this dreadful disease. Members might have visited the exhibition of quilts entitled “Yes we can—together!” in the garden lobby at the end of last month, which was exhibited by my constituent Ann Hill, who is Alzheimer Scotland’s quilter in residence. She creates quilts for people who are suffering from dementia, after speaking to them and their carers about the things that were important in their earlier lives. The quilts have a variety of themes, but they mean special things to the dementia sufferers who receive them. They help by stimulating the memory and reminding people about the things that they love. Ann is encouraging other quilters to take up the Hampden challenge of covering the pitch at Hampden with these quilts during dementia awareness week in June. If anybody is handy with a needle, I encourage them to help Ann in her efforts.

Many older people are terrified that they might succumb to dementia. Often, in old age, people are more frightened of that condition than of many other killer diseases that are prevalent in Scotland. However, when I spoke at the event in October, it struck me that we do not talk about dementia enough. There used to be a similar attitude towards cancer; people would not refer to cancer. Fortunately, we are over that but we need to take the same view of dementia and talk about how dementia can be treated medically and therapeutically and about how carers can be supported. Events such as tonight’s debate help to raise the profile of dementia and will, hopefully, encourage people to talk about it.

17:50

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** I thank Jackie Baillie for securing the debate and pay tribute to Tommy Whitelaw and the others who are in the public gallery today. The Tommy on tour campaign was fantastic at raising awareness of what dementia means not just for the sufferers but for the thousands of carers out there and the organisations that have put it at the top of their agenda.

I had written down some words, but I think that the best thing that I can do is just to hold up the dementia carers’ voices leaflet on “Supporting Rights and the Carer Voice”, which tells us everything. What I really like and admire about the organisation is the fact that it is very much a grass-roots organisation that is built from the bottom up and that listens to the people at the coalface, not necessarily the professionals who receive from the coalface. It mentions various

issues to do with carers’ experiences, which the organisation knows about from people writing back to it. It says that there needs to be greater understanding, particularly among professionals, of the national dementia strategy and the right to dignity and respect—an issue that Fiona McLeod raised. As she said, when someone is caring for a person with dementia it is difficult for them to get through the maze of paperwork and bureaucracy to find exactly what is right for them. The national dementia strategy offers that, but we need to push it out more to professionals, who are the ones that we need to speak to and tackle.

Mark McDonald talked about the amounts of money that carers receive each week through their benefits. As Claire Baker and others have said, it is not about the money, but if someone has a family with a couple of kids and they have to give up their job, they need something to support them—particularly with the increase in utility bills—and £58.45 is not a lot of money. In some cases, people cannot take another job. I know that, unfortunately, benefits are outwith the scope of the Scottish Parliament, but we need to look at that situation.

I am the convener of the cross-party group on older people, age and ageing—Nanette Milne is the deputy convener, as Jim Hume was—and dementia has been raised on many occasions within the group. There are many fantastic organisations and individuals out there, including Alzheimer Scotland and Tommy Whitelaw, who give their all to ensure that people who have dementia are put to the forefront. We always look forward to someone coming along to give us advice on the best way forward.

Today’s debate is a fantastic opportunity to hear about individual cases. We did not realise that my mum had dementia until my dad died and, when we went to visit her, we found that the sink was overflowing, the pot was burned and the gas was left on. Similar to the case of Jim Hume’s parents, my dad had protected my mum from anyone knowing that she had dementia. Fortunately, as we are a big family, someone was able to stay with her every night—that is not the case for everyone—until she became so ill that she could not stay in her own home and, unfortunately, we had to put her into a care home. Such personal experiences, which come through the carers’ voices, mean so much; it is about the grass roots and the people who have suffered.

We talk about suffering but, as Nanette Milne said, there are sometimes humorous moments or moments of great joy when the sufferers hear music that they remember or when they see kids, as Mark McDonald said. In my mother’s case, such moments were when she saw her grandkids and great-grandkids. However, at times, she

thought that I was her sister and said that I was not to go out because I was bad or something like that—obviously, my auntie had done something wrong in her past life. For us, that time was joyful as well as sometimes sad.

I commend what is being done, which we have heard about in the debate. To have a grass-roots organisation talking upwards to professionals is the best way forward. I thank Jackie Baillie for bringing the debate to Parliament.

17:55

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Like others, I congratulate Jackie Baillie on securing time for this important debate. I thank all those members who stayed and have contributed to what has been a powerful debate, and I particularly thank those who shared with us some of their experiences with their loved ones and the impact that dementia has had on their families.

I also pay tribute to Tommy Whitelaw. I have met him and I follow him on Twitter. He does extremely important work, including with the Health and Social Care Alliance's dementia carers' voices project. I also pay tribute to the work of Alzheimer Scotland's national dementia carers action network.

What is unique about the dementia carers' voices project was highlighted by Sandra White in her speech. It seeks to capture those moments of experience that come from the carers of those who look after someone with dementia, which can be an extremely powerful tool in helping both us, as policy makers, and others to understand the challenges and the issues that need to be addressed in helping to support individuals who have dementia and their carers. It is a valuable project that will help to shape how we do things in future. It provides an opportunity to ensure that we are well aware of the, at times, intensely challenging experiences for carers who live with someone with dementia and that we can support them as they go through their illness.

A number of members mentioned the increasing challenge that we face as a society, given the demographic shift that is taking place in Scotland, as in many other western European countries, and the likelihood that it will lead to an increasing number of individuals within our population having dementia. It is important that we recognise the challenge that exists here and now, which is a challenge that we will also face in the years to come. We need to take appropriate action to address the challenges both now and into the future.

That is why the national dementia strategy for Scotland is important. It has started that process in

a strategic way. It focuses on meeting two challenges, and we have made good progress in those areas. One of the key challenges was the diagnostic test for individuals with dementia. Scotland has met that challenge extremely well and has outperformed England and Wales in that key area, but we need to ensure that we build on that in moving forward.

The other key challenge was around implementing the standards of care for dementia in Scotland and the skills framework, "Promoting Excellence: A framework for all health and social services staff working with people with dementia, their families and carers". Both are underpinned by the key principle that family carers should be equal partners in care. We have supported the work that Alzheimer Scotland is taking forward in appointing dementia nurse consultants to boards across Scotland. We now have 300 trained dementia champions, with more to come. However, we also know that it is important that professionals who work in healthcare and social care settings recognise the role of family carers in helping to support a loved one when, at times, they require a period in hospital or another care setting.

From April, there will be our national guarantee that everyone who is diagnosed with dementia will receive a minimum of one year's post-diagnostic support, co-ordinated by a named worker. That is very much about trying to do what Jackie Baillie highlighted, which is to ensure that we develop comprehensive, person-centred plans for the ongoing and future care of individuals, and that we develop them in a way that is suited to the person's particular situation. The post-diagnostic guarantee is not dependent on setting, whether it be a social care setting or a person's home.

We will also take forward work with the Life Changes Trust, as it administers grants from the Big Lottery Fund to the tune of some £25 million from this year for initiatives that will benefit people with dementia and their families and carers.

As members have said, we are in the process of looking at bringing forward the second phase of our national dementia strategy. We have had an engagement process that has allowed the whole sector to get involved and express its views on how we should move forward. Our proposition paper outlines how we will build on the progress that has been made as we move forward to 2016 and ensure that we continue to upskill the workforce in both health and social care settings. We also want to help to sustain performance in early diagnosis and improve post-diagnostic support and care in hospitals. In all those areas and more, we want to engage with and involve people with dementia, their families and carers as equal partners in care.

A number of members have referred to some of the challenges that carers can often face, particularly those who care for someone with dementia. It is extremely important that we continue to ensure that we do what we can to support carers in facing their many challenges. Some of the work that we are taking forward is about trying to ensure that we improve identification of carers, who can often be challenged in getting access to the services and support that might assist them—for example, the Fir Park service to which John Pentland referred. It is important that carers have the skills to allow them to do that, so we are funding NHS Education for Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council to work on carer workforce development initiatives to help in that regard.

One group that is particularly important in acting as a gatekeeper to support services is general practitioners. So far, we have taken forward a number of initiatives with them to help with access to support. The general medical services contract agreement for 2013-14 includes, for the first time, a specific carers indicator. That means that GP practices in Scotland must have systems in place to identify carers and a mechanism for referral of carers to services that can assist and support them.

Fiona McLeod raised the dementia card. We are taking forward the young carers card and I have no doubt that that will develop into a carers card, which I think will help to address some of the issues that she mentioned. John Pentland raised employment for carers. One thing that we must do is to engage with the employment sector to ensure that it recognises the role of carers and the value of supporting them. That is something that I have already started, and we are just about to appoint a project worker with Carers Scotland to take forward an employers' kitemark, which is about helping to ensure that employers have carer-friendly policies in place.

There is certainly more that we can do and I am determined to ensure that we do it alongside our carers' rights charter, carer training initiatives, the funding of the voluntary short breaks fund and the carers Parliament, which will meet here again this year, allowing carers to come together. I hope that I can assure Jim Hume that there is certainly no complacency on the part of the Government in trying to continue the process that we have been taking forward in recent years to help to support carers and to work with organisations that have an important role in supporting carers.

Another area that I think is worth mentioning is the value that self-directed support can have for individuals with dementia and their carers. We ran a self-directed support project through Alzheimer Scotland in Ayrshire that proved to be very

beneficial for families and individuals in finding ways and solutions that were best suited to them. I believe that the introduction of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 is an opportunity to build on the work that Alzheimer Scotland is taking forward to ensure that more carers of individuals with dementia and dementia sufferers can benefit from self-directed support.

The integration of health and social care provides us with a unique opportunity to ensure that services operate in a much more co-ordinated fashion, that we recognise carers' roles and that services are much more aligned to individuals' needs rather than those of organisations. I have no doubt that, as we move that forward, it will help to provide greater certainty across the country that services will be delivered in a much more joined-up fashion.

Again, I congratulate Jackie Baillie on bringing the debate to the chamber. The Government regards this area as a key priority, and we will continue to build on the progress that has been made over recent years to ensure that we continue the momentum that has been gained and that it makes a real difference to the lives of both those in Scotland who have dementia and their carers.

*Meeting closed at 18:05.*





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