



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 2 October 2013

Session 4

---

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk) or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

---

Wednesday 2 October 2013

CONTENTS

	Col.
<b>PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME</b> .....	23149
<b>EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING</b> .....	23149
Educational Psychologists .....	23149
Second-language Learning .....	23150
Scottish Universities (Poll Rankings) .....	23151
Supply Teachers .....	23152
Teacher Employment .....	23153
Teacher Employment .....	23155
Young People (Internet Use) .....	23156
University of the Highlands and Islands (Meetings) .....	23157
Glow Network Replacement .....	23159
Looked-after Children .....	23161
Female College Student Enrolment .....	23162
Careers Guidance .....	23162
School Internet Connections .....	23163
School Closure Procedures .....	23164
UK Student Visa Rules .....	23165
<b>EMERGENCY QUESTION</b> .....	23167
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (IT) .....	23167
<b>COST OF LIVING</b> .....	23173
<i>Motion moved—[Jackie Baillie].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Angela Constance].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Gavin Brown].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Liam McArthur].</i>	
Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab) .....	23173
The Minister for Youth Employment (Angela Constance) .....	23178
Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con) .....	23182
Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD) .....	23185
John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP) .....	23188
Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab) .....	23190
Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP) .....	23192
Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab) .....	23194
Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP) .....	23197
Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab) .....	23200
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP) .....	23203
Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green) .....	23205
Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab) .....	23207
James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP) .....	23210
Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP) .....	23213
Liam McArthur .....	23215
Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	23217
The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil) .....	23220
Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab) .....	23222
<b>POINT OF ORDER</b> .....	23227
<b>BUSINESS MOTIONS</b> .....	23228
<i>Motions moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS</b> .....	23230
<i>Motions moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	
Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	23230
The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown) .....	23231
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	23233

<b>TEENAGE CANCER TRUST</b> .....	23244
<i>Motion debated—[Aileen McLeod].</i>	
Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP) .....	23244
Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab) .....	23247
Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP) .....	23249
Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	23250
Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD) .....	23252
Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab) .....	23253
The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson) .....	23254

---

# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 2 October 2013

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

## Portfolio Question Time

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Good afternoon. Before I call the first item of business, I would like to advise members that I have selected an emergency question from Neil Findlay on the information technology problems at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. This question will be taken after portfolio question time.

## Education and Lifelong Learning

### Educational Psychologists

**1. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to increase the availability of educational psychologists. (S4O-02442)

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** Educational psychology services are provided by education authorities in Scotland as a statutory requirement under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, and educational psychologists are employed directly by authorities to fulfil those duties. We are working in partnership with the national Scottish steering group for educational psychologists to look at appropriate workforce planning at a national level.

**David Stewart:** A few short weeks ago, I met a student from Elgin who told me that she had just started a two-year master of science course in educational psychology at the University of Strathclyde but had to pay the full £9,365 yearly tuition fees even though, last year, no fees were applicable on the course. I will, of course, write to the minister about her case, but how will the introduction of tuition fees for this course widen access to higher education and tackle the shortage of educational psychologists across Scotland?

**Dr Allan:** I am more than happy to correspond with the member on individual constituents.

I point out that the costs of tuition for these courses must be seen in the context that they are postgraduate courses. Were we to follow the practice elsewhere of charging tuition fees for first degrees, things would obviously be different, but we do not: we provide first degrees free. With regard to the postgraduate course in question, a loan is provided to cover the costs of tuition.

I do not underestimate the task faced by any student in taking on postgraduate study but it is important to point out that 38 students are currently training as educational psychologists and that that meets the demand that has been set out. However, as I have said, I am more than happy to correspond with the member on any individual.

### Second-language Learning

**2. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what the educational benefits are of learning a second language. (S4O-02443)

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** The educational benefits of learning a second language are well documented and include personal, cognitive, economic and societal benefits. Young people develop increased confidence and better skills in, for example, talking and listening and a greater understanding of how language works.

The Scottish Government recognises those benefits, which is why we have a manifesto commitment to create the conditions in which all young people can learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue—in other words, the one-plus-two model—by 2020. We are taking that forward in many ways, including through additional funding and support for local authorities.

**Bill Kidd:** I thank the minister for that very full reply. Mindful of the fact that a large body of evidence demonstrates that the benefits of a second language extend to subjects across the curriculum, I wonder whether the minister can give me further detail on the Scottish Government's plans to increase the provision of second-language learning in our schools.

**Dr Allan:** The member makes the good point that the benefits of learning languages extend to other subjects. For that reason, we are working with local authorities to increase the provision of that learning to ensure that by 2020 pupils start their second language in primary 1 rather than primary 6, which is what generally happens at the minute, and that we make steady progress towards that aim. We also plan to introduce a third language in primary 5 in all schools by 2020.

In taking that forward, local authorities have been requested to audit their current language provision and we have committed £4 million in 2013-14 to help them to do that. This provision will not simply appear overnight in 2020; instead, it will require a change in attitude and practice in schools across Scotland. Schools and local authorities are enthusiastic about making that change.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):**

Given the educational benefits stated by the minister and given the future proposals that he has outlined, why has the number of foreign-language assistants fallen from 284 in 2006 to only 59 in 2012? In fact, even though our population is much bigger, Scotland has fewer language assistants than Wales or Northern Ireland.

**Dr Allan:** I understand that the number has gone up to 74 this year from the 59 that Mary Scanlon mentioned.

We would like to see more assistants, which is why we work with and support the British Council and others. However, it is open to local authorities to decide how to use the additional funding that is being provided for languages. If they use some of that for foreign language assistants, that is a cost-effective way of doing things. I am satisfied that we are doing a lot and that the numbers have stabilised and are going up.

**Scottish Universities (Poll Rankings)**

**3. Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns)**

**(SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what it considers the benefits are of the performance of Scottish universities in recent polls for students domiciled in Scotland. (S4O-02444)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** The rankings confirm what we already know about the strengths of our world-class system of higher education. Students who study here—let us not forget that a record number of Scottish students were accepted into our universities this year—can be confident in the quality of what our universities offer, which is precisely why more than 90 per cent of graduates find themselves in positive destinations six months after they complete their degrees.

**Nigel Don:** One consequence of the high standing of Scottish universities is that they attract the best foreign students. The recent “Richer for it” report commented on the number of international students who come here. The Scottish Council for Development and Industry recently warned that its biggest concern for the future of research in Scotland is the United Kingdom Government’s visa policy. Does the cabinet secretary share my concerns about that?

**Michael Russell:** Absolutely. Such concerns are shared across the higher education sector; university principals will make that point. At a recent event on the future of higher education that I took part in at the University of Dundee, every panel member—including Opposition spokespeople on education—agreed that the policy of successive UK Governments has been negative.

The result has been a detrimental impact on the international competitiveness of Scottish education. The policy adds burdens for our institutions and students and it deters students. I have to say—I am sure that members will not be surprised—that independence will provide the clearest and best way of giving us the opportunity to manage immigration so that we can meet our nation’s economic, social and demographic priorities.

**Supply Teachers**

**4. John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it is supporting local authorities in relation to the availability of supply teachers. (S4O-02445)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** The Scottish Government undertakes annual teacher workforce planning discussions with local authorities, as represented by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Association of Directors of Education, together with the professional associations, universities, the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and Education Scotland. The exercise includes provision for supply teachers.

The Scottish Government plays an active role through the Scottish negotiating committee for teachers in discussions on pay. An SNCT pay offer is on the table that will improve pay for those who undertake supply work, and I hope that the teacher unions will accept that offer. It is of course each local authority’s responsibility to manage its teacher workforce in a way that ensures that it has sufficient staff to meet local needs.

**John Scott:** The cabinet secretary will be aware of the recent staffing difficulties in the English department at Marr college, where he received a self-evidently excellent education. Will he assure me and my constituents that a lack of appropriately qualified supply teaching staff in that department is now resolved? If not, what help can the Scottish Government give South Ayrshire Council in what is and has been a difficult situation?

**Michael Russell:** I am glad that the quality of the education at Marr college shows so obviously to the member—it was indeed of high quality.

I stress that the matter is for South Ayrshire Council, and I do not want to diminish its responsibility. As the member knows, I have asked the council what progress it is making and whether assistance can be given. The council is resolving the matter and is taking steps to do so. Those steps appear to be bearing fruit, including appointments to new posts. The council hopes

that the matter will be resolved in the next week or two. I encourage John Scott to come back to me on whether more help can be given if that is required.

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary will be aware that recent figures show that teacher unemployment is at its lowest level for eight years. I am sure that, like me and others, he very much welcomes that. Will he explain the reasons for that wonderful success?

**Michael Russell:** I welcome the recent figures that show that teacher unemployment is at its lowest level in eight years. The jobseekers allowance claimant count has fallen by 29 per cent in the past year to the lowest August figure since the current time series began in 2005, which endorses the actions that we have taken. We have achieved the drop by cutting student teacher numbers, moderating the supply side of the equation and securing a shared commitment with local authorities to maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers, which ensures a continuing demand for teachers.

The figures also show a far lower level of teacher unemployment in Scotland than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. Of course, we can adjust those figures as needed, and I know that subsequent questions might enable me to go into more detail about how we do so.

### Teacher Employment

**5. Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with local authorities about teacher employment issues. (S4O-02446)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** The Scottish Government discusses a wide range of issues with local authorities—including issues relating to teacher employment—on an individual and a collective basis.

In addition to ad hoc bilateral discussions with individual local authorities, we engage more formally with them about teacher employment issues in three ways: we regularly attend the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland's personnel network; we have a key involvement, as I have said, in the Scottish negotiating committee for teachers; and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland are represented with us on the teacher workforce planning advisory group.

**Liz Smith:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that answer. Notwithstanding the SNCT offer that is on the table, which is obviously designed to improve the attractiveness of supply teaching, can the cabinet secretary tell us what measures he believes are being put in place by the local

authorities to ensure that it is qualified supply teachers who are employed, rather than other employees in local authorities, who may be seen as lower cost?

**Michael Russell:** There is an obligation to provide teachers to teach in schools—that has been an issue of some contention on other occasions, but I would not expect teachers to be substituted for.

We need to ensure that there is an adequate number of teachers to meet most of the anticipated circumstances. Obviously, there cannot be a system that deals with every single circumstance of every absence in every Scottish school and there will be times when that has to be borne with, but, for most of the time, there should be sufficient teachers to be able to cope in those circumstances.

The difficulties with teacher employment are historical; they arise from an oversupply up to 2007, which had to be adjusted. It was unsustainable in the circumstances. We have now brought the numbers broadly into balance and we need to continue to keep them in balance. The teacher workforce planning exercise includes an element for supply. The new arrangements that are on the table with regard to salaries adjust the agreement that we reached two years ago. That agreement was accepted by the unions and the local authorities. It was not imposed—it was an accepted agreement—but it has required to be looked at again and it is being looked at again.

I also say to the member that one of the surest guarantees of success in this matter is to accept that we should keep essentially the ratio of teachers to pupils that we have at the moment. It is a very good measure to continue with. It is there, it is being used, it is part of our agreement with COSLA, and I do not think that we should go into a situation in which anybody questions the effectiveness of that measure. We should keep it in place.

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** What does the cabinet secretary see as the main benefits of Scotland's unique offer of a year of probation, which is offered to all those who qualify?

**Michael Russell:** The year of probation is a unique offer and it is an offer that is extremely well thought of worldwide. Prior to the introduction of Scotland's unique teacher induction scheme, many teachers spent their probationary period working on a piecemeal basis in a variety of schools with little or no continuity of experience or support. It was very much a sink or swim experience.

Now all new teachers who are eligible to join the scheme are offered a year-long contract with one

local authority in one school. They enjoy a four-hour weekly reduction in class contact time compared with experienced teachers, continuity as regards the class or classes that they plan for and work with, dedicated time with their mentor, and a structured programme of professional development that is provided by their school and local authority.

That is part of the growing and developing arrangements for teacher employment. I spoke yesterday morning at an event that was organised by the teacher employment group that is working with the Scottish Government to look at how teacher employment and training issues develop through probation into whole-career assistance.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, as long ago as 2007, said that Scotland's approach to teacher induction was world class. It remains world class and will go on being world class.

**The Presiding Officer:** Question 6, in the name of Helen Eadie, has been withdrawn. The member has provided a satisfactory explanation.

### Teacher Employment

**7. Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** At the risk of continuing the theme, to ask the Scottish Government what recent action it has taken to improve teacher employment. (S4O-02448)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** There is even more that I can say on this theme, but the Presiding Officer does not look that enthusiastic that I do so.

Post-probation employment prospects for new teachers are better than in each of the past four years and I have given the figures. We achieved that by taking difficult decisions to limit the supply of new teachers—we cut student teacher intake numbers in 2009, cut them more severely in 2010 and then pegged them at that level in 2011.

We have also addressed the demand side of the equation. Despite the financial constraints, we have secured a shared commitment with local authorities to maintain teacher numbers in line with pupil numbers. However, given the lead time that is required to bring new teachers into the profession, we are gradually increasing student teacher intakes again by 300 in 2012 and by a further 370 in 2013 to ensure that we meet future demand without reverting to the boom-and-bust situation of the past. I will be looking at the situation again later this year.

**The Presiding Officer:** Angus MacDonald, do you want a supplementary?

**Angus MacDonald:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that reply and acknowledge his answers to questions 4 and 5.

I am aware that the Scottish negotiating committee for teachers has been monitoring supply issues and that the Scottish Government has been assisting with that monitoring. In light of the recent reports on supply teacher numbers, what steps can the cabinet secretary take to increase the number of available supply teachers in Scotland?

**Michael Russell:** I should probably say that I refer the member to the answers that I gave earlier, but I assure him that we look at such matters very seriously. I think that the current SNCT pay offer—I urge teachers to accept it—will make a difference and should bring in some who have opted out of supply work. However, the surest guarantee is maintaining the number of teachers.

### Young People (Internet Use)

**8. Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to protect young people using the internet. (S4O-02449)

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell):** Although regulation of the internet is a reserved matter, we have established a stakeholder group on child internet safety that includes representation from a wide range of sectors. The group is a means of identifying emerging new concerns and is a way of highlighting and taking forward any necessary national action to address those concerns. We will continue to work within our powers with partners such as Police Scotland and the child exploitation and online protection centre to improve the online safety of Scotland's children. We will announce further steps in this area shortly.

**Christina McKelvie:** The minister will be aware of the parliamentary debate that I led a few weeks ago that raised awareness about revenge porn and its devastating impact on people affected. We now have a frightening emerging situation of young people being groomed, threatened and bullied into performing sexual acts or dangerous self-harming on the internet. These images and videos are then being used to blackmail young people into doing more extreme acts, which is driving some young people to consider and even attempt suicide. Does the minister agree that this is a very alarming situation indeed? Does she welcome the advice that the child exploitation and online protection centre released this week saying, "Please tell someone. You are not to blame"?

**Aileen Campbell:** Absolutely. I am very well aware of Christina McKelvie's parliamentary



debate last month. In her response to that debate, my colleague Shona Robison outlined the strategies that she is taking forward to end violence against women. I also endorse what Christina McKelvie said about the CEOP advice and I recognise that Police Scotland has issued advice to child victims of online sexual exploitation, to potential victims and to parents and carers on how to keep safe online. That is a message that we cannot afford not to reiterate time and again. As I said in my original answer to Ms McKelvie, we will announce more steps in this area very shortly.

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** Can the minister tell me how much of her strategy is focused on peer-led cyberbullying, which she will be aware is a significant problem? In the 70 pages of the Government's "Behaviour in Scottish Schools 2012" report, cyberbullying is mentioned in only one paragraph. Is she doing enough to tackle cyberbullying in schools?

**Aileen Campbell:** Online safety in Scotland is monitored by a stakeholder group on child internet safety, which is looking at the issue of cyberbullying. As Christina McKelvie mentioned—and as I think Christina McKelvie is trying to bring to our attention—we cannot do enough on this issue, which is growing and growing. We owe it to all children across Scotland that they should be kept free and safe from harm. As I said in my original answer to Christina McKelvie, we intend to announce more work on this area very shortly.

#### **University of the Highlands and Islands (Meetings)**

**9. Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (Ind):** To ask the Scottish Government when the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning last met the board of the University of the Highlands and Islands and what issues were discussed. (S4O-02450)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** As universities are autonomous and independent bodies, board meetings are a matter for individual universities and are not generally attended by Scottish ministers, nor do ministers often have meetings with boards. However, ministers meet regularly with a wide range of university chairs and principals. I have met the principal of UHI formally and informally in recent months—also in the absence of a chair.

**Jean Urquhart:** Regarding the agenda for any of those meetings, would the cabinet secretary agree with me that, if UHI is to flourish by attracting students on to its courses, more appropriate residential accommodation will become a necessity at some of the partner colleges? Given the geography and structure of

UHI, private development may be less attractive. Does the cabinet secretary accept that there might be a requirement for public funds to allow this necessary development to take place? Would he be interested in discussing the matter with UHI?

**Michael Russell:** UHI is of course a unique institution, consisting of 13 colleges and other bodies. Representatives of one or two of the colleges have raised issues with me—in particular during my summer tour this year—about accommodation and the difficulty of attracting accommodation. In raising her question with me, the member will probably be mindful of the position in Shetland, as the issue was raised with me by members of the board of Shetland College, one or two of whom I met when I was visiting Shetland.

The issue of how the university or the colleges invest in accommodation is an important one, and I am always happy to have discussions on the matter. Universities are often able to fund student accommodation through commercial arrangements, but if colleges are having difficulty, and if it is proved that the accommodation is needed—the University of the Highlands and Islands is also a distributed university, with a distributed studentship, many of whom are online—those discussions can take place. Of course, that is in a context of very great pressure on public finances.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Given that some of the funding for further education colleges in the Highlands and Islands comes through UHI, with its overhead costs of £15 million, some colleges are asking: how much will be taken out of the funding for colleges as it is filtered down through UHI?

**Michael Russell:** That has been a long-term issue. As the member will know having participated in the discussions on the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill and having met other MSPs and me on this specific issue, the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 contains provisions that should ensure that an agreed amount of money is taken and that there is a role for the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council.

The real solution to the problem, which has been a matter of grievance in the past, as the member knows, is to ensure that the positioning of the further education board within the University of the Highlands and Islands is strong and that there is mutual respect between the board, its component parts and the university as a whole. I believe that the recent change to the university's articles of association will help to achieve that. The legislation guarantees that and builds that in. Were there to be any question of that not being the case, the Scottish funding council has a role.

There is a triple lock on that. The Parliament, and Highland members in particular—I pay tribute to all the Highland members involved—have helped to secure that. There were also representations from a range of colleges.

### **Glow Network Replacement**

**10. Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the replacement for the Glow network will be operational by December 2013. (S4O-02451)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** I can give the member a positive no. We are not waiting until December. New Glow services are being rolled out now, and they will continue to be introduced and to come on stream in the coming months. That includes services to support the migration of information into Office 365 as well as the introduction of agile, open, best-of-breed systems that will enhance learning for children, young people and practitioners in Scotland.

I can announce today that Bill Maxwell, chief executive of Education Scotland, will be writing to all directors of education later this week about the next level of support that we will be giving to local authorities to help them to manage the change as they move from the decade-old SharePoint 2003 portal into a SharePoint 2013 environment.

Migration has proved technically challenging, as I know from my conversation last week at the Scottish learning festival with representatives of the contractor, RM Education, but they and I are confident that it will be successfully completed.

**Kezia Dugdale:** I find that answer very surprising. The ICT group that the cabinet secretary mentions has described the project as being in chaos, and Education Scotland told Dumfries and Galloway Council that it would not be ready until October 2014. The cabinet secretary spent £5.5 million extending the contract, and he has already spent £80 million on the Glow network, which is not working. Thousands of hours of teachers' work have been lost, and thousands more are required to rebuild the network. Will the cabinet secretary tell teachers and pupils what they have got for the £80 million that he has spent on Glow?

**Michael Russell:** I would advise the member to be careful about some of the rhetoric surrounding the issue from one or two individuals. It is not borne out by the teacher membership of some of the significant groups, and it was not borne out by a number of people to whom I spoke at the learning festival, or indeed by some of the traffic at the learning festival.

Let me be clear about what is happening. The move from the current Glow to Glow in Office 365

started in April 2013, with the migration of the email system, which is now complete. There were significant technical issues associated with the migration of the data from the current Glow portal to the new SharePoint 2013 environment, which we have worked with our partner organisations RM and Microsoft to overcome. The migration of the content is now well under way. To date, about two thirds of the content has been migrated and 20 local authorities have access to all the new services in Office 365. The remaining 12 local authorities will have their portal content migrated by December 2013, which will include access to the Office 365 environment.

The data is being transferred from SharePoint 2003 to SharePoint 2013, but the unpacking of the data into the new SharePoint 2013 environment is proving difficult for some local authorities to manage. On-going work with key Glow contacts in local authorities continues to support them during this period of change. That includes an adoption support site that is available in Office 365, with some bespoke materials. *[Laughter.]* I am glad that Jackie Baillie is enjoying this, because, being very switched on, she will be entirely familiar with the technical matters that I am talking about.

The materials are being developed by teachers for teachers. The Office 365 support materials have been made available by dual running of the current Glow and Office 365 for a period of six months. That will give local authorities more time to carefully consider and consult on what content they want and need to populate the new environment and on creating the best possible experiences for children and young people and other users of their Glow service. *[Laughter.]* I am glad that members are enjoying this. I have a great deal more, if they wish to hear it. *[Interruption.]*

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** Spare us!

**Michael Russell:** I think that I heard a no there from some members, so clearly they are fully satisfied with what is taking place.

Glow has been and continues to be a remarkable success, but of course it will change. It has an average of 55,000 users weekly and there were 1.3 million Glow logons in May and June this year.

**Kezia Dugdale:** It does not work.

**Michael Russell:** If the member wishes to have access to Glow by means of her own password, I am willing to arrange that. Then she will see how it operates, which will give her huge confidence in what is taking place and in the work of so many people to make it work.

### Looked-after Children

**11. Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to ensure that looked-after children who have been in multiple placements have access to a stable education. (S4O-02452)

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell):** The Scottish Government will continue to make sure that the needs of looked-after children, young people and care leavers who have experienced multiple placements are embedded in its wider work to improve outcomes, such as getting it right for every child, curriculum for excellence, additional support for learning and more choices, more chances.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill will improve the way in which services work to support children, young people and families by ensuring that there is a single planning approach for children who need additional support from services; creating a single point of contact around every child or young person; ensuring co-ordinated planning and delivery of services with a focus on outcomes; and providing a holistic and shared understanding of a child's or young person's wellbeing. The bill also places a duty on corporate parents to collaborate with each other when exercising their duties in relation to looked-after children, young people and care leavers.

**Mary Fee:** GIRFEC and a stable home life are indeed important factors in stability for looked-after children. However, we know that looked-after children are significantly more likely to use our colleges than to use our universities. Does the minister agree that, with college budgets being cut, we must do more to support looked-after young people with their second-chance education?

**Aileen Campbell:** We are doing an enormous amount of work to support children who are looked after. I could list a number of things that we are doing on that. We have created the centre for excellence for looked after children in Scotland, or CELCIS, we have strengthened additional support for learning legislation and we are doing much to ensure that practitioners are empowered and given the appropriate training materials. However, the issue persists that the attainment of looked-after children needs to be supported more fully and they need to be given the opportunities that every other child in the country has.

We will absolutely ensure that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill helps us to move the agenda forward. I know that not just in my portfolio but across the education brief and the Government, we intend to ensure that we take our corporate parenting responsibilities seriously to ensure that these children go on to succeed.

### Female College Student Enrolment

**12. Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how many female students were enrolled in colleges in 2007 and 2012. (S4O-02453)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council figures show that the majority of college learners are female. According to the funding council, the figure for female full-time equivalent students was 68,724 in academic year 2006-07, and 68,642 in 2011-12, which was a change of 0.1 per cent. I am pleased to say that that means that overall learning activity for female learners has been broadly maintained.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that answer. He gave the answer very quickly so it was quite difficult to catch the detail, but is not it the case that there has been a sharp decline in the number of part-time students in further education colleges and that the majority of those students are women? What gender impact assessment did he apply before changing college policy and reducing the part-time places available?

**Michael Russell:** We have been clear all along that it is, and was, important at a time of considerable pressure on youth unemployment to move as quickly and as radically as we could to ensure longer and more focused learning opportunities to take account of employment needs. That has been challenging, but it has been successful.

We have more than met our targets for full-time equivalent student numbers, which are virtually unchanged since 2006-07. That focus on full-time equivalent numbers has been important, but I accept the point that it is also important to continue to focus on women learners, and particularly on disadvantaged women learners. For example, we have asked colleges to deliver more for women. We have invested an extra £10 million in the academic year 2013-14 to target additional places for women returning to education, and those learners will be supported with record levels of student support—£97 million, including an additional £1.9 million this year for childcare and improved bursaries. Actions are being taken, and those actions will help in terms of employment and access.

### Careers Guidance

**13. Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to improve the quality of careers guidance provision in schools. (S4O-02454)

**The Minister for Youth Employment (Angela Constance):** The careers information advice and guidance strategy was published in March 2011. It sets the framework for the redesign and improvement of careers guidance for all, and Skills Development Scotland has been modernising its offer to schools and carrying out a series of reviews to ensure that it is meeting the needs of today's young people. The focus is on developing the career management skills of individuals in order to equip them to seek and grasp career opportunities and to have the agility to cope when their circumstances change throughout their working lives.

**Neil Findlay:** In a recent study of the my world of work website, University of Edinburgh academics Cathy Howieson and Sheila Semple confirmed that web-based services should never replace face-to-face contact, because face-to-face contact is most valued by the majority of young people. Given the recent Skills Development Scotland research, in which only 859 pupils out of 200,000 who are registered responded to the survey, does the minister accept that conclusions that are drawn about the value of my world of work from such a small survey should be treated with extreme caution?

**Angela Constance:** My understanding of the Skills Development Scotland customer satisfaction survey is that between 800 and 900 people replied and that the research that Mr Findlay mentioned was based on interviews with about 1,000 young people. I will take the evidence in the round, because the evidence in the round from that research and from previous research demonstrates what we have always said as a Government—that we have not and will not replace front-line careers advisers with web-based services.

The modernisation process is about having various channels of delivery. In the modern world, we want to use web-based facilities, but we also want to retain face-to-face contact. Last year, Skills Development Scotland delivered to all secondary 4, S5 and S6 students group sessions and face-to-face contact in relation to my world of work and vital career management skills. We are delivering our careers information, advice and guidance strategy through a variety of methods, and we will continue to do so.

### School Internet Connections

**14. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that all schools have adequate internet connections. (S4O-02455)

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** At a cost of £2.1 million in 2013-14, the Scottish

Government funds interconnect 2.0, a high-speed broadband network that provides an internet connection to all 32 Scottish local authorities, which is intended for use by education establishments.

Although interconnect delivers broadband to the local authority, connectivity to the individual education establishments remains the responsibility of the authority. Over £410 million of public and private sector funding is being invested in two of the largest and most complex next generation broadband infrastructure projects anywhere in Europe. Within that, investment in the Highlands and Islands amounts to £146 million, with £264 million invested in the rest of Scotland.

**Rhoda Grant:** The minister will be aware that connectivity in remote and rural areas provides schools with the ability to offer a wider curriculum. As the Scottish Government is delivering interconnect to 32 local authorities, he will be well aware that it proves a challenge to the authorities in the Highlands and Islands to deliver it to schools because they have the biggest geographical spread—more schools and greater distances to travel. What support is the minister giving them to ensure that we have a level playing field and that children in Barra gain from the service as well as children in Baillieston?

**Dr Allan:** As an island member, I have an interest in that as well. I am never done with being in touch with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other agencies about some of the issues around rural broadband in the Highlands and Islands.

I should say that, from a national point of view, after this year, the Scotland-wide area network for schools—SWAN—will replace much of what is currently in place through interconnect. It is worth stressing that a truly enormous sum of public money is going into broadband in the Highlands and Islands. As I said, £146 million will be invested to bring fibre optic cable to many parts of Scotland that do not have it.

I entirely agree with the sentiment that every school in Scotland deserves that right to connectivity.

### School Closure Procedures

**15. Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what procedure local authorities should follow when taking decisions to close schools. (S4O-02456)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** It is important that local authorities are open and transparent in their consultation with parents, children and communities on school closure proposals. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out a clear process for statutory

consultation on proposed changes to the school estate, and ministers expect councils to comply fully with those statutory duties.

**Annabelle Ewing:** The cabinet secretary will be aware of Labour-led Fife Council's plans to close a number of primary schools, notwithstanding the fact that parents' views have not been taken into account and that the proposals do not make financial sense. Is there anything that the parents of, for example, Crombie, Wellwood and Pitcorrhie primary schools can do to ensure that their voices are heard?

**Michael Russell:** I am aware that, on 16 September, Fife Council commenced a phased consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on a series of school closure proposals. Those consultations will run over the next three weeks. Full details can be found on Fife Council's website.

However, the 2010 act requires the council to inform relevant consultees—which includes parents of any pupils at any affected school—of the proposals and how they may respond to the consultation. That includes attending a public meeting or responding in writing to the consultation. I strongly encourage all parents and any other interested parties to take those opportunities to ensure that their voices are heard.

Under the 2010 act, the Scottish ministers may call in and subsequently determine a closure decision. It is inappropriate to comment further at this stage on Fife Council's plans in case that is seen to prejudice any decisions that must be taken. However, as the 2010 act clearly requires, I expect educational benefits for the affected children to be central to all school closure proposals that any council makes.

### UK Student Visa Rules

**16. Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what it considers the impact is of United Kingdom student visa rules on Scotland's universities and colleges. (S4O-02457)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** As I indicated earlier, we welcome talented people to live, learn, work and remain in Scotland. However, the negative message that is sent to prospective students by the UK Government's student visa policies is a significant concern. Those policies threaten a detrimental impact on the international competitiveness of Scottish education, create additional burdens on institutions and students, and could well deter prospective students from applying to study in the UK. The Government has made clear its concerns to successive UK ministers of various hues on several occasions.

An independent Scotland would manage immigration in a way that effectively meets our nation's economic, social and demographic priorities for a sector that is one of the largest in our economy.

**Sandra White:** I thank the minister for that reply and his earlier reply. Is he also aware of the problems facing many students from so-called blacklisted countries in opening bank accounts in Scotland, which mean that many are unable to continue studying and, ultimately, are forced to return home?

**Michael Russell:** I understand that the UK immigration bill is expected to be introduced during the second week in October. That bill will propose that banks should no longer be permitted to operate bank accounts for certain migrants. I also understand that the Home Office intends to consult on additional powers to compel banks to close bank accounts for certain illegal migrants. My understanding is that that should not affect the bank accounts of those who are studying legitimately in Scotland, but I stress that the Scottish Government has not seen the draft legislation, and we will monitor it closely.

I cannot imagine that any legislation of that nature will draw people to study in Scotland, and that is the issue. If those actions are deterring people from studying in Scotland, they are deeply undesirable. The Scottish Government should have a responsibility there, and I do not think that any Scottish Government of any hue would act in that way.

## Emergency Question

14:40

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is an emergency question from Neil Findlay on the information technology problems at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

### NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (IT)

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the information technology problem at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has informed us that, as a result of a failure in its IT infrastructure yesterday morning, a number of out-patient appointments, in-patient procedures, day surgery cases and chemotherapy appointments have had to be postponed. Despite national health service staff working overnight to resolve the issue, it has continued into today. I stress right away that maternity and emergency services have been maintained throughout.

I understand that the failure is related to network servers that serve a number of the board's systems and sites. That meant that clinicians were unable to access some services, including some patient records and imaging. In addition, the recognised standby process did not kick in.

There has been minimal impact on day cases and in-patient procedures. Only those procedures that require live access to images and theatres have been affected today. There has been an impact on out-patient appointments where the consultant is seeing a patient for the first time or requires access to electronic patient records. However, early indications are that, up to now, fewer than 10 per cent of out-patient appointments have been affected by the incident, and there has been minimal impact on day cases and in-patient appointments. That said, I express my concern for all those patients whose treatment was affected yesterday and today.

This morning, I spoke to the chair of the board, and the director general for health and social care in the Scottish Government has spoken to the board's chief executive. I can report that NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has now been able to resolve the problem with the server and is incrementally reloading users back on to the system. No data appear to have been lost. Around 50 per cent of users now have access to the system, and the remainder should have access by later this evening. The system is being closely monitored to ensure that it remains robust.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is contacting all patients who have been affected by the incident to ensure that they receive their treatment as soon as possible and that appointments are rescheduled as quickly as possible. I have asked that the board keep in close contact with my officials to ensure that we are fully apprised of the situation going forward. In addition, my officials will work closely with the board to establish the root cause of the incident and share the lessons with other NHS boards.

Finally, I thank all staff in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for their efforts over the past two days in working to resolve the issue.

**Neil Findlay:** Obviously, the situation is very worrying. Many people have had their appointments cancelled. Will the cabinet secretary advise what will happen to patients who have missed appointments and cannot get another one immediately? What reassurance can he give patients who are waiting for treatment over the next few days? It is my understanding that similar systems are used in other health board areas. Will the cabinet secretary instruct an independent review of all IT systems that are being used to ensure that robust contingency plans are in place across Scotland?

**Alex Neil:** On the last point, I have already instructed a robust review right across the NHS in Scotland with all the NHS boards to ensure that the IT systems, including the back-up systems, are robust.

Before I came to the chamber, I was updated on the figures for the people who are affected, as members would expect. Over the past two days until midday today, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has postponed 500 out-patient appointments, 14 planned in-patient procedures, 43 day cases and 48 chemotherapy patient treatments. However, in the same period, 7,400 patients have had their procedures and appointments maintained.

On the first point that Mr Findlay raised, every effort will be made to ensure that those affected by the problem will be treated at the earliest possible opportunity. It will be a matter of urgency to ensure that all those affected by the crashing of the IT system will receive their appointments as soon as possible in the near future.

**The Presiding Officer:** I have had many requests for supplementaries. I will do my very best to get through them.

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary said that emergency services have not been affected. Can he confirm that and say whether he expects there to be any problems at all with emergency services?

**Alex Neil:** I can guarantee that no one requiring emergency or maternity services has been affected, nor is there any anticipation whatsoever that that would happen even if the problem was not resolved this evening. The essential impact of the IT failure has been to deny access to certain aspects of the IT systems. I can give the member a list of the systems affected if she desires that level of detail. The impact has been on planned appointments and planned procedures, and there has been no impact on emergency or maternity services, I am delighted to say.

**Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con):** Does the cabinet secretary agree that what happened was not a failure of policy or management, but the failure of a system? Will he accept the support of everybody on the Conservative side of the chamber for the work that has been done to resolve the problem as speedily—it turns out—as it has been?

Alex Neil referred to lessons being learned and potentially passed on to other health boards. In resolving the issue, has the health board isolated now what the problem was and does it have any reason to believe that it may be something that other health boards need to know about urgently in case such an incident were to occur elsewhere, or was it more unexpected in nature?

**Alex Neil:** First, I thank Mr Carlaw for the tone of his remarks, which are much appreciated here and which I am sure will be much appreciated by the staff who are working so hard to resolve the issue.

It is too early yet to be absolutely sure why the problem happened and why the back-up system was not more resilient. The two software companies concerned—Microsoft and Charteris—are involved full time with our staff as well as with the staff of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde in trying to get to the root cause of the problem.

I am obviously cautious, but it now looks as though we have broken the back of the problem in terms of the system being successfully rebooted and back up. We will know definitively how robust that is by later this evening. However, the top priority is to get to the root of the problem so that we can be absolutely sure that it does not happen again in Glasgow or in any other part of the national health service in Scotland.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's commitment to ensuring that those who have missed appointments are seen as quickly as possible. Will that be done on the basis of one offer or as many offers as it takes? Clearly, people need to plan and sometimes to rearrange their lives in order to attend hospital appointments. In the event that someone is offered a new appointment quickly, as the cabinet secretary

suggested, but is unable to take it up, will they be able to continue to liaise with the health board to get the appointment as soon as possible, rather than be put at the back of the queue?

**Alex Neil:** Under the circumstances, every effort will be made to accommodate patients who have been affected by the impact of the IT system crash. We will be totally flexible in trying to ensure that people get appointments as quickly as possible. Inevitably, that will involve some people working longer hours for a short period, and extension of the hours for appointments to ensure that everybody who has been affected by the problem is treated within a reasonable period. I have had the total assurance of the chair of the board that absolutely every stop will be pulled out to ensure that patients get their postponed treatment or appointment at the earliest possible opportunity, which I hope in every case will be well within a month, or even a week or days.

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** I, too, recognise that the Government has acted very speedily on the issue, so it is not a matter of criticising any policy.

However, can the cabinet secretary say how many patients he anticipates will now fail to be treated within their treatment time guarantee periods? Can he confirm that all those who have been affected who are awaiting chemotherapy and who have missed appointments will receive their scheduled treatment by the end of the week?

**Alex Neil:** First, on chemotherapy, I should say that the chemotherapy services are working fairly normally today. Yesterday's chemotherapy appointments were affected, however.

Again, I thank Jim Hume for the tone of his remarks. Until the IT system is up and running, I cannot give him any statistics or information on the numbers who have been affected in terms of the treatment time guarantee. Once I am in a position to do so, I will be more than happy to supply members with that information. I am sure that, when the formal TTG statistics for the period come out, members will be understanding of any breaches in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** Although I welcome the IT review across all health boards that the cabinet secretary mentioned, no IT system will ever be foolproof. Does he believe that health boards have contingencies in place to ensure that, when computer systems stop working, patient care of the most vulnerable patients, including cancer patients, is not compromised?

**Alex Neil:** Absolutely. There are two contingencies, one of which is the back-up IT system, which for some reason did not, as I said earlier, work in this case. That is particularly worrying and it is one reason why we are placing

so much emphasis on getting to the root of the problem—the problem being not only the original malfunction but why the back-up system did not work when it should have done. We are testing that elsewhere.

There are other back-up systems for, for example, chemotherapy, in order to ensure that patients are treated as they would normally be treated. Where necessary, paper exercises have been undertaken to minimise impacts, in particular on chemotherapy and patients who require very serious treatment.

**Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for his answers so far. He has covered the incident in a lot of detail.

I ask the cabinet secretary not to underestimate the scale of the incident, although I am sure that he does not. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde books 20,000 appointments a week, and a large number of people have missed appointments, although many others have not.

In the interest of not wasting a crisis, I ask the cabinet secretary whether lessons can be learned. I am sure that he has had representations from staff about the introduction of TrakCare and their concerns about it. The redeployment and scaling down of secretarial staff has had an impact, and there have been issues and problems on the ground with the promised hardware.

I am sure that the cabinet secretary will take those issues on board while the full scale of the incident is investigated, and that he will ensure that resources are put in place to resolve the issues that have arisen for many of my constituents and others in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's area.

**Alex Neil:** Duncan McNeil has made a number of reasonable points. I point out that 10 hospitals across NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have been affected, but some of the patients come from further afield, including from Ayrshire and parts of Lanarkshire, and in particular for chemotherapy services, for example.

I emphasise to Duncan McNeil that the problem is not with any particular software but with the server. Although TrakCare has been adversely affected, that was not a result of a problem with TrakCare but a result of the problem with the server. So that Parliament is fully informed, I confirm that the systems that have been adversely affected are TrakCare—as I said, not because of a problem with that system but because of a problem with the server—Portal, Ascribe and PACS, plus other diagnostic systems, laboratory systems, chemotherapy systems and the contact centre.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** The cabinet secretary is well aware that NHS Ayrshire and Arran depends on NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for provision of services, as do many other adjoining health boards. What effect has the loss of IT capacity had specifically on service provision in NHS Ayrshire and Arran?

**Alex Neil:** Once the IT systems are up and running again, I will ask for an analysis of the home areas of the patients who have been affected, if we can do such an analysis, so that we can find out how many patients from Ayrshire and Arran, Lanarkshire and other health board areas have been affected. Because of the problem itself, I am not in a position to give reliable statistics at the moment, but I will be more than happy to supply members with reliable analysis when it becomes available.

**The Presiding Officer:** I apologise to the two members who were not called. I need to protect the next item of business.



## Cost of Living

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-07872, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on the cost of living.

14:55

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that times are tough, but times are much, much tougher for some people than they are for others. I am not often given to quoting David Cameron, but this will not be the first time that I have done so and I am sure that it will not be the last. I remind all members that at a previous Tory conference he said, while talking about the recession and the United Kingdom plan for recovery,

"it's fair that those with broader shoulders should bear a greater load."

What a shame it is that he did not believe his own rhetoric. It took him less than a month to forget his promise and embark on swingeing public sector cuts of £81 billion, including £18 billion of cuts to benefits—all that while the most affluent avoid paying taxes to the tune of £120 billion.

The reality of the Tory-Lib Dem coalition Government is tax cuts for millionaires—of which at least eight sit around the Cabinet table—and hedge funds and the ultimate scandal of Tory ministers scurrying to Brussels to protect bankers' bonuses.

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** Will the member give way?

**Jackie Baillie:** No. We have heard enough from you. [*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** A simple "No, thank you" would suffice, Ms Baillie.

**Jackie Baillie:** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

The last time I looked, it was millionaires and bankers who had the broadest shoulders, but members should not kid themselves that those people are feeling the pinch or bearing a greater load. It is families in my constituency and throughout Scotland who are bearing the burden and struggling to make ends meet. Those are the people who are increasingly out of pocket, while David Cameron is increasingly out of touch.

People who are paid weekly do not have enough money to get them through the final couple of days. People who are paid monthly struggle to have enough money to make it through the final week. I am talking not just about people who are unemployed and families who are on benefits but about working families. Many people who work hard but are on low wages are

appearing at food banks so that they can feed their children, seeking out payday lenders, which they cannot afford to pay back, and running up rent arrears and defaulting on mortgages as they make decisions about priorities for their families.

The reason why the problem is so acute is that the cost of living is rising at the same time as income is declining in real terms, and people cannot afford to make ends meet. Let me illustrate that. Since 2010, wages in Scotland have fallen in real terms by £27.30 a week. That is £1,420 a year, which is a lot of money for someone who is low paid. In fact, wages have fallen in 36 of the 37 months in which David Cameron has been Prime Minister.

The Low Pay Commission has noted that the minimum wage has not kept up with inflation and the real value is lower than the increase in the consumer prices index and the retail prices index. The commission suggested that the value of the national minimum wage at October 2012 was at a level that had not been experienced since 2004, some eight years ago.

**John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** Does Jackie Baillie agree that if the national minimum wage had been introduced at the rate of £5 per hour, which unions asked for at the time, we would not be in the current situation, with the minimum wage falling far behind the Scottish living wage?

**Jackie Baillie:** That was an interesting intervention from John Wilson. Aside from the fact that Labour ensured that the minimum wage was uprated adequately, I recall that the Scottish National Party slept through the debate and the vote on bringing in the national minimum wage. I will take no lessons from John Wilson now.

The Tories have squeezed the minimum wage and reduced its value in real terms. In contrast, Labour would strengthen the minimum wage and end the scandal of the abuse of zero-hours contracts.

The real-terms reduction in public sector pay is in its fourth year, which is taking its toll on staff and their families. There is no doubt that there is a real squeeze on incomes among people who are low paid—never mind the cuts to benefits, which I will come on to.

That is bad enough, but people who are struggling to make ends meet face a double whammy, because prices are rising at the same time as incomes stagnate.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report "A minimum income standard for the UK in 2013" highlighted the fact that the cost of a basket of essential goods and services has increased by nearly 25 per cent in the past five years. That is staggering. The cost of bread is up, the cost of

milk is up and the costs of electricity and gas are up. Over the past three years, since the Tories came to office, prices have risen faster in the United Kingdom than in any other G7 country. We face a cost of living crisis of enormous proportions with really harsh consequences for people and families on low incomes.

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP):** I appreciate what the member says and believe that she and I would be in agreement on a lot of things. However, how does she square that circle with her desire and her party's desire for those same low-income families to pay more in council tax?

**Jackie Baillie:** That is just ridiculous. If we examine the SNP's record, we can see that it is the SNP that is taking money away from low-income families by not targeting their needs.

We have also seen cuts in benefits including the bedroom tax and the shift from disability living allowance to personal independence payments, assuming a reduction of 20 per cent in the budget at the outset. Perhaps the most concerning cut is the reduction in children's benefits. There is a freeze on child benefit and tax credits are soon to be rolled up as the universal credit, but children's benefits are, overall, falling in real terms because the cost of bringing up a child is increasing. A decade of progress on reducing child poverty and family deprivation is being steadily reversed.

Donald Hirsch, a director of the centre for research in social policy at Loughborough University, who leads the work on the minimum income standard, had this to say:

"This trend differs from anything seen in my lifetime—including in the 1980s, when the poor were standing still as the rich progressed. Now, absolute living standards have declined over a sustained period, including for those who started out with least, for the first time since the 1930s. It's the first time since that decade that basic safety-net benefits have been cut in real terms."

If we have to go back more than 80 years to experience anything as bad, that must surely be a wake-up call for all of us.

Let me turn to the Scottish Government. I know that the SNP's take on this will be that it is Westminster's fault and that the only way out of the situation is to vote for independence, but that is lazy and sloppy thinking. It is not the fault of an institution; it is the fault of the Tories. If the people disagree with what the Tories are doing, there is a clear choice: they can vote Labour at the general election. There are things that the SNP Government can do if it so chooses—things that are well within the Government's and the Scottish Parliament's powers. However, instead of focusing on what matters to hard-pressed families and communities, SNP members have only one focus, one obsession and one thing that commands all their attention: independence. The SNP is guilty of

putting Scotland on pause and doing little to tackle the most acute cost of living crisis in more than 80 years.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Will the member give way?

**Jackie Baillie:** I have not got time.

I campaigned for a Scottish Parliament because I realised the Parliament's potential to help people at times such as this. Just as the late, lamented Strathclyde Regional Council had a social policy that prioritised and targeted support at many of those struggling in our communities, so a Scottish Parliament could take action. I am, therefore, disappointed and ashamed that little is being done.

The SNP stands accused of being so cynical and shameless that it will prey on people's misery to get them to vote yes in the referendum rather than take action to help now. Let us look at some of the areas that the SNP could tackle, starting with childcare. The most recent Scottish childcare report by Children in Scotland reported that nursery costs for a child under two are now more than £100 a week, which is a lot of money for someone on a low income. Childcare costs for the over-fives see parents paying an average of £50 a week for an after-school club, and those costs are rising by more than the rate of inflation. Childcare in Scotland is the least affordable in the UK aside from that in the south-east of England.

Save the Children is also clear in its belief that childcare has a key role to play in tackling early inequalities between children and reducing child poverty. Quality, affordable childcare is key to helping parents to access and sustain employment and training. However, Save the Children had this to say about the provisions of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill, which seek to extend childcare:

"they represent baby steps compared to what needs to change to ensure that every child and family can access suitable childcare."

Last week, Ed Miliband pledged that childcare would be extended to 25 hours a week for every three and four-year-old of working parents and that childcare would be guaranteed for all primary school children from 8 am to 6 pm. That is what Labour would also deliver in Scotland. Will the SNP match that or is it content to leave Scotland on pause?

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

**Jackie Baillie:** I genuinely do not have enough time.

What about food banks? The Trussell Trust reported in April this year that the number of people in Scotland using food banks has risen by

150 per cent to a staggering 14,318, of whom one third are children and one fifth are in full-time employment. The latest research from Debt Advisory Services (Scotland) shows that one in 10 Scots—500,000 Scots—borrowed money to pay for food in July. If members need any more evidence of a cost of living crisis, there it is.

We are all grateful for the work of the volunteers in communities across Scotland, but what a damning indictment it is of us all that food banks even exist. It appears from anecdotal evidence that some local authorities have sent people to food banks rather than provide a crisis grant. Crisis grants and community care grants are part of the Scottish welfare fund, which is hugely underspent. Only half of what could have been allocated has gone out the door at a time when the need is self-evident. It is astonishing that after a direct transfer of power to the SNP, which it wanted, it cannot even spend the money. That is another example of Scotland on pause when ministers are not interested in getting their day jobs right.

The pledge made by Labour and agreed by the Parliament was that we would abolish fuel poverty by 2016, yet when I ask ministers whether we are on track to do so I do not even get an answer. Let me try again: will the Scottish Government succeed in realising our collective ambition to end fuel poverty in three years' time? The ministers' heads are down and there is no response.

Using the Government's own measures, Energy Action Scotland estimates that the number in fuel poverty stands at some 900,000 people. Over the past five years, energy costs have increased by 39 per cent and average household spend on fuel has reached a high of 14 per cent. If members need any further idea of the scale of the cost of living crisis they need look no further. What does the Government do? It has a £79 million budget and relies on £120 million coming from energy company obligations to make that up. That budget is underspent this year—yet another example of the SNP not getting the money out the door to the people who need it the most.

Last week, Ed Miliband proposed to tackle rising energy bills by pledging that the next Labour Government will freeze gas and electricity prices until the start of 2017. That will provide real relief for hard-pressed families and older people, and it is time that the Tories stopped laughing and took action to protect people. Does the SNP support that proposal? I listened to SNP MP Mike Weir a few nights ago when he said that it does not. Is the SNP really not prepared to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with families who are struggling? The SNP should not blame somebody else. Its own fuel poverty forum has told it that it needs to do

more. That is another case of Scotland on pause while the SNP plays constitutional politics.

I can see that I am rapidly running out of time.

**Members:** Hear, hear.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Jackie Baillie:** It is depressing the SNP chooses to play constitutional politics instead of thinking about the real issues affecting people in Scotland.

I have already said enough to this SNP Government about the bedroom tax. I hope that it does not make a deliberate decision not to use the powers it has to protect people from the bedroom tax now.

I will conclude on child poverty. I am very proud of the progress that the Parliament made. We saw the lowest level of relative and absolute poverty in the first years of the Parliament, up to 2007. Sadly, under the SNP, progress has stalled.

The SNP needs to wake up. Many families in communities across Scotland have a real cost of living crisis. Those families need and deserve our help now, but the SNP puts Scotland on pause. It is guilty of the most shameless politics that puts the referendum first, before the interests of the people of this country.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the decline in real wages for people in Scotland at a time when living costs are rising; understands that the cost of essentials such as food, childcare and energy has risen and the report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2013*, shows that, over the last five years, the cost of essential goods and services has increased by nearly 25%; is concerned at the increases in the number of people in fuel poverty and using food banks; notes that, in 2011-12, there were 950,000 people living in absolute poverty in Scotland, 220,000 of whom were children, and believes that both the UK and Scottish governments must act urgently to tackle these issues.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that members will have to keep to their time limits, as the debate is oversubscribed.

15:09

**The Minister for Youth Employment (Angela Constance):** I very much welcome the debate, which gives the Parliament an important opportunity to continue to make its distinctive voice heard on such vital matters.

I begin by making it clear that, as a Scottish Government, we are absolutely determined to address the root causes of poverty. Scotland is a wealthy nation. We would be the eighth-richest nation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development by gross domestic product per head. We are energy rich, our

workforce is highly skilled and our reputation for innovation is long established. We have world-class universities and Scottish businesses are competing at the highest level worldwide. It is therefore a social, economic and moral disgrace that, in a resource-rich nation such as ours, tens of thousands of children live in poverty. It is also a disgrace that tens of thousands of older people live in poverty. Perhaps more than anything, it is a disgrace that that has been true for generation after generation.

It is time to change all that, and I believe that Scotland has what it takes to make that change. That is why, as a Government, we have invested so much in supporting household incomes and tackling poverty. Others in this Parliament may call that "something for nothing"; we call it our social wage. It is our contract with the people of Scotland.

Our amendment picks out just a few of the initiatives of this Government and, indeed, previous Administrations. I am proud to say that we have frozen the council tax, which will have saved the average band D household in Fife more than £1,600 by 2016-17.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** Will the minister take an intervention?

**Angela Constance:** In a minute.

The bus pass for Scotland's older citizens saves cardholders around £250 a year and the scrapping of bridge tolls saves a regular commuter £233 a year.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** Will the minister give way?

**Angela Constance:** In a moment.

Nursery care is being expanded, which will save families £707 per child per year.

**Drew Smith:** I am grateful to the minister for coming back to me.

There is something that I would like the minister to help me with. I thought that the position of the Scottish National Party was that the council tax was a regressive tax. How does freezing a regressive tax make it progressive?

**Angela Constance:** Unlike David Cameron, I believe in a Scotland in which those with the broadest shoulders bear the biggest burden, but to allow that to happen we need to have a social contract that benefits everyone. Knowing that everyone gets something makes our society more cohesive. I understand why people might want to debate how many universal services we can afford when we are in the grips of Westminster austerity, but what I object to most is the attack on the principle of universal benefits and the notion of a social contract. We are a cohesive society.

Through the powers of independence, we want to protect and develop the social wage. We do not want it to be knocked down as a result of Labour's regressive party politics or Westminster austerity.

Let us not forget that we have free prescriptions that save the sick and infirm £104 per year and free university tuition that saves students £9,000 a year, or that free personal care for the elderly, which was introduced under a previous Administration, is funded and maintained by us. Those and other initiatives form our social wage. We are protecting incomes, delivering services and mitigating Westminster's misguided austerity. We are doing so not simply because we believe that those are the right things to do for the benefit of everyone in Scotland, but because they are the fair things to do, and because international evidence shows that countries with greater equality perform better in economic terms.

However, we are doing so in the teeth of Westminster cuts, which will take hundreds of millions of pounds from households on low incomes. The cumulative reductions in Scotland will total an estimated £4.5 billion by 2015, around £1 billion of which will impact directly on children. We will not be able to mitigate the impact of all the changes, but we must continue to act when and where we can.

We have therefore pledged £23 million to mitigate the cut in council tax benefit funding and have established in partnership with councils the Scottish welfare fund, which amounts to £33 million for crisis grants and community care grants. We are also spending nearly a quarter of a billion pounds over the spending review period on fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the minister give way?

**Angela Constance:** In a moment. As John Swinney has made clear, this Government will not walk by on the other side.

I give way briefly to Jackie Baillie.

**Jackie Baillie:** I will indeed be brief. Does the minister support Ed Miliband's energy price freeze?

**Angela Constance:** I think that Ed Miliband's energy price freeze is very well intended. It is a scandal that in a resource-rich country such as Scotland we have fuel poverty. However, I would like Ed Miliband to publish the full analysis of the research that underpins the policy. I also note that we have a very important energy commission that is looking at fuel poverty and pricing as well as the sustainability and supply of energy in an independent Scotland.

**Jackie Baillie:** But does the minister support the principle?

**Angela Constance:** I want to see the details. However, I have to say that I would have had more confidence in Ed Miliband had I not looked at his record in government as energy minister, during which time energy company profits rocketed and household bills went up by more than 33 per cent.

This Government has pledged to find £20 million to help those struggling most with the costs of the bedroom tax. However, although that help is absolutely vital and has been widely welcomed, it does not hide the harsh truth that mitigation will not and cannot be enough. That is the very point that the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations made forcefully this week in its report, "A better state: inclusive principles for Scottish welfare", which makes it clear that what we need are the powers to deliver Scotland's own welfare and taxation systems.

I agree with Jackie Baillie when she criticises Westminster cuts, and I share her concerns about the most vulnerable in our society. However, I cannot agree with her comment on 3 September that

"I am not saying that ... we cannot develop our own welfare system. I am saying we should not develop our own welfare system."

It seems to me that Labour is willing to do no more than criticise Westminster cuts to welfare when what Scotland needs is to do is cut Westminster out of welfare.

**Jackie Baillie:** Does the member not agree that it is actually quite progressive to share the risks and rewards across the country and redistribute some of the wealth in the south-east up to Scotland?

**Angela Constance:** It is a moot point. Sometimes when I speak to the most vulnerable people in my constituency it feels as if we take all the risk and see very little of the reward.

I also note that earlier this year, in response to the UK Government's Welfare Benefits Up-rating Bill, the chief executive of the Children's Society, Matthew Reed, said that

"a nurse with two children could lose £424 a year by 2015 and an army second lieutenant with three children £552 a year."

He went on to say:

"Many more will struggle to pay for food, heat their homes, and provide other basics for their children as they find it increasingly difficult to keep up with rising prices."

That is not the Scotland we seek on these benches; we want a different Scotland. We want the powers to achieve that vision of a more prosperous and fairer Scotland. However, the Labour Party—the so-called party of equality—with its colleagues on the other side of the

chamber wishes to relinquish and abandon powers of welfare and taxation.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You are in your final minute.

**Angela Constance:** In my final minute, I want to make it clear that we very much need the ability to ensure that decisions affecting the day-to-day lives and living standards of people in Scotland—decisions around tax and welfare—are taken here in Scotland by the people of Scotland. With those powers—the powers of an independent nation—we can put an end to welfare cuts and abolish the bedroom tax; we can protect household incomes and maintain the social wage; we can build a taxation and welfare system that is a progressive beacon; and we can end the generations of shame that have been caused by child poverty and which have existed under the Labour union as well as the Tory union. More than ever, what we need are the full powers of an independent nation.

I move amendment S4M-07872.3, to leave out from "and believes," to end and insert:

"welcomes the action taken by the Scottish Government to support household incomes including the council tax freeze, the maintenance of free bus travel for older people, the extension of free nursery provision, the introduction of free personal care for older people, free university tuition and abolition of bridge tolls, and believes that, with independence, including control of taxation and welfare, Scotland can be a beacon of progressive action to tackle poverty and maintain household incomes."

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Gavin Brown, who has a tight six minutes.

15:20

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** I will start with a quote from the BBC political correspondent Ben Wright, who said on 11 August:

"With an economy that now seems to be gathering momentum, one of the key arguments that Labour have been making for the last two years—the government got this wrong, their economic prescription failed—is no longer as powerful a message as it was six months or a year ago."

Which is why we are hearing a lot today about living standards."

The Conservatives welcome the debate, but it is particularly disappointing that Jackie Baillie's motion and her speech were heavy on rhetoric but extremely light on solutions, ideas or suggestions for how we might tackle the problems that she has identified. What does Labour want the UK Government to do? Something. What does it want the Scottish Government to do? Something. Labour members want the Scottish and UK Governments to do something; they do not know what that is and have no idea what they want to be done, but they want it to be done urgently.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Gavin Brown:** Perhaps Ken Macintosh has the answer; if so, I am happy to give way.

**Ken Macintosh:** Could Mr Brown start by freezing energy prices?

**Gavin Brown:** That is the Labour Party policy that dared not speak its name until 12 and a half minutes into the 14 minutes of Jackie Baillie's speech. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Gavin Brown:** It was interesting that Jackie Baillie spent several minutes talking about how it is wrong not to target resources. When she was in Strathclyde Regional Council, she believed in targeting resources. When she was in the then Scottish Executive, it believed in targeting resources. She says that it is wrong not to target resources. However, she praises Ed Miliband's so-called energy policy, which I think—unless I missed a memo—does not target resources at all. It is a blanket freeze across the board.

**Iain Gray:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Gavin Brown:** If Iain Gray can contradict what I said, I will be happy to take his point.

**Iain Gray:** The point is clear. We believe that the use of scarce public money should be targeted. As for energy companies that are making outrageous profits, we believe that we should target all of them.

**Gavin Brown:** I am just getting warmed up. Jackie Baillie also praised a childcare policy that Ed Miliband pulled out of the hat last week, which is not targeted but universal. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Gavin Brown:** Mark McDonald was right to make the point in an intervention that the council tax freeze is extremely important. We have enthusiastically backed the Government on that since 2008 and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's minimum income standard report says that the council tax freeze is important.

I do not know the Labour Party's current policy on the council tax freeze. First it was against the freeze and then it was for the freeze. Perhaps it is in favour on Tuesdays and Thursdays but against on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Gavin Brown:** Perhaps Jackie Baillie will tell us the official Labour Party policy on the council tax freeze.

**Jackie Baillie:** I would like to ask Gavin Brown a question. How can you stand there when you know that 500,000 people needed a loan to buy food in July? Does that not embarrass you?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I ask members to speak through the chair.

**Gavin Brown:** I do not think that any Conservative member is complacent about the challenges that we face, but the challenges that we in this country face are harder than those in many other countries because the previous UK Government built up a deficit and an enormous debt in times of plenty. We do not blame everything on the previous Government, but it must take at least a share of the responsibility.

**Drew Smith:** Will the member give way?

**Gavin Brown:** I have given way several times already and I want to make some progress, so I will not give way right now.

The coalition Government has raised the income tax threshold, which will be £10,000 in April of next year. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that although that does not entirely offset increases to living costs, it partially offsets them. It has made a difference to millions in Scotland and taken more than 200,000 people out of income tax altogether. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report talks about childcare costs being particularly difficult, having risen twice as fast as CPI inflation in the past five years, but in its conclusion it says this:

"plans for more generous support of childcare costs from 2016 will, if implemented in their proposed form, greatly reduce the earnings required by families with children to reach the Minimum Income Standard."

The UK Government cancelled the rise in fuel duty that was projected. It has been frozen for three and a half years and we heard this week that it will be frozen again up until the general election. That of course impacts on the cost of motoring and has a particular significance in rural areas, but it affects public transport costs too and the cost of goods more generally.

We have the pensions triple lock, which has helped pensioners right across the country, and we now have the council tax freeze south of the border, which will make a difference in the years ahead. The UK Government is not complacent; there is a huge challenge to be faced and it has taken a number of specific measures to tackle it.

I move amendment S4M-07872.4, to leave out from first "notes" to end and insert:

"recognises that, as a result of the economic crisis and the consequent need to cut the deficit, there has been a squeeze on living standards, and supports the positive action that the UK Government has taken to ameliorate this squeeze, including increasing the personal allowance to £10,000 by April 2014, which will benefit 2.2 million

taxpayers in Scotland and take 224,000 out of tax altogether, keeping mortgage rates low, cutting fuel duty and freezing the current level of fuel duty until 2015, announcing a new scheme to help families with childcare costs and delivering the biggest ever cash rise in the basic state pension in 2012 of £5.30 thanks to the so-called triple lock guarantee."

15:26

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Jackie Baillie's motion—if not her speech—legitimately illustrates the challenges to us all as policymakers, and particularly to those who are in office north and south of the border.

It is perhaps worth recalling for Jackie Baillie's benefit that the gap between rich and poor went up under Labour and that the highest earners pay more and will pay more every year under this Government than they did in any year under the previous Labour Government. I will address the Scottish Government's approach shortly, but my amendment identifies important steps taken by the coalition Government in response to those challenges. Gavin Brown's amendment highlights many of the same points but, in deleting the original motion, it perhaps risks glossing over the extent of the problems that we are witnessing.

Gavin Brown rightly identifies, of course, the source of many of the problems, which was an economic crash unlike any since the 1930s. That brutal shock to our economic system, combined with unsustainable levels of debt that had been allowed to build up, required addressing. The consequences of not doing so—of ducking those hard choices—should not be underestimated or ignored, as Jackie Baillie and Angela Constance seemed happy to do earlier. The alternative was to find ourselves facing many of the same painful problems that have been endured by European partners such as Greece, Spain, Italy and even Ireland.

Although the need for decisive action to rebalance our economy was, I believe, essential, I welcome the steps that have been taken to mitigate some of the impacts. Low and medium-rate taxpayers, those in receipt of basic state pension and those struggling to meet childcare or fuel costs have all benefited from additional support from the coalition Government.

Of course, the Liberal Democrat commitment during the last UK election campaign to raise the threshold at which people would begin to pay tax to £10,000 was not supported by everyone. I recall David Cameron insisting during the leaders' debate that it was a laudable aspiration but an unaffordable one and yet, by April 2014, thanks to the Liberal Democrats in Government, 224,000 lower paid taxpayers in Scotland will be taken out of paying income tax altogether. Overall, 2.2

million taxpayers in Scotland will benefit from that significant, progressive change to our tax system.

**Mark McDonald:** The member will also be aware that the Institute for Fiscal Studies did an analysis of the UK Government budget across the board and it showed that the tax changes were in many cases cancelled out, and in some cases negatively so, by the benefits changes that are being pursued.

**Liam McArthur:** It is an interesting point—it is a familiar theme from the SNP and perhaps during Mark McDonald's own speech he will set out what of the £2.5 billion-worth of welfare spending he is committed to seeing reinstated post-independence, should that come to pass.

On pensions too, the coalition Government has introduced progressive reform. The so-called triple lock, which links pension increases to inflation, wages or 2.5 per cent, whichever is highest, has already delivered the highest cash increase to the state pension—a far cry from the 75p increase offered by Gordon Brown, which caused such fury not so long ago. It is a far cry too from the extravagant promises made by the SNP about pensions in a separate Scotland. Backed by no evidence, those assertions offer no response to the concerns raised by many independent experts, including the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

As on pensions and income tax, so too on childcare the coalition Government has acted to provide much-needed support. The package south of the border now includes free provision for 20 per cent of two-year-olds from the most deprived backgrounds—that is, for 130,000 children—and that will rise to 40 per cent next year. From 2015, the UK Government will meet 20 per cent of childcare costs for working families, with the amount that can be claimed per child under 12 rising to £1,200 per year once the scheme has been fully implemented. That will go some way towards meeting the demands that Save the Children and others have made.

There has been welcome confirmation of a further freeze in fuel duty over the next two years.

**Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Liam McArthur:** Sorry, I cannot.

Of course, with every price hike efforts by both Scotland's Governments to combat fuel poverty are set back, but the only long-term solution is to step up work to improve energy efficiency, notably across our existing housing stock, and to ensure that we meet our renewables target.

That is why Ed Miliband's proposed price cap is a concern. The price cap would be a costly temporary fix that would draw vital investment away from the sort of measures that are essential

as part of a long-term solution to reduce fuel poverty and to achieve emissions reductions. It should also be recalled that, when Ed Miliband became Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change in 2008, he said that he would

“press energy firms for price cuts”.

As Angela Constance reminded us, when Ed Miliband left office, energy company profits had soared and average bills were up by more than 30 per cent.

As well as building fairness into the tax and pensions system and providing support to hard-pressed families and individuals struggling with childcare or fuel costs, we also need to prepare the ground for building a stronger economy. That is why my amendment highlights the coalition Government's work on extending apprenticeship opportunities, supporting science and research and ensuring that investment is made in the new green economy. Of course more needs to be done, but those measures demonstrate a willingness by the Government to address structural problems in our economy in a way that also locks in fairness.

The Scottish Government will argue that it is also taking steps to mitigate the impact of rising costs—I do not disagree with that—but, bizarrely, SNP ministers seem to believe that they are wholly responsible for any money that is spent in Scotland but entirely blameless for any money that is not provided. That is simply not credible, as government is about choices. If SNP ministers choose to spend in one area, that restricts what they can do in other areas. I note that Alex Neil's amendment mentions a number of policy areas, including the introduction of free personal care that was delivered by the previous Lib Dem-Labour Executive—we see history being rewritten before our very eyes. Predictably, he goes on to argue that it would all be different with independence, but the contortions that the SNP wishes to perform with what economic levers would be left after ceding control of the currency would defy even the most esteemed of Nobel laureates.

In trying to persuade increasingly sceptical voters of the case for separation, the SNP has racked up an impressive and growing list of costly commitments—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that you must finish.

**Liam McArthur:** But the only tax commitment that the SNP has made is to reduce corporation tax. The Greens at least have the intellectual honesty to acknowledge that, if we want to spend more, we need to tax and borrow more.

For a further response, we need to look to the long term. However, too often the SNP's

obsession with next year's referendum has encouraged it to opt for short-term fixes.

I move amendment S4M-07872.1, to insert at end:

“; supports the UK Government's determination to cut the income tax bills of people on low and middle incomes by raising the threshold for paying tax to £10,000; supports the UK Government's decision to apply a so-called triple-lock to pensions to ensure that they increase by the highest of inflation, wages or 2.5% and endorses new support for childcare; believes that these steps, combined with support for apprenticeships and young workers, the Green Investment Bank and investment in science and research, will help create a stronger economy and a fairer society, enabling every person in Scotland to get on in life, and, noting that UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is on 17 October 2013, supports the commitment of the UK Government to spend 0.7% of national income on overseas aid to help tackle global poverty.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate. The time available for speeches is a very tight six minutes each.

15:33

**John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I welcome the opportunity to debate the Labour Party motion on the cost of living. I realise that today's debate follows on from a well-developed theme that was unveiled to the public and Labour Party members at the Labour Party conference in Brighton last week. However, today's debate also comes a day after the latest increase in the national minimum wage, which has increased by 12p an hour—in percentage terms an increase of 1.9 per cent.

This is an important debate because it shows that the crisis centred on the cost of living leads to a wider discussion about economic growth and what type of society we want to live in. The growing inequality in our society that has been encouraged over recent decades has had a particular impact on those families and individuals who are on the lowest incomes and who suffer the worst effects of poverty.

I had to pinch myself last week when I realised how times have changed. I remember as part of my previous employment attending meetings of the Trades Union Congress national minimum wage enforcement group, where we discussed with officers from the Inland Revenue and the Department for Work and Pensions how the minimum wage might impact on people's lives.

I also remember being phoned in 2006 by consultants who asked me who I thought would be the best person as incoming chair of the Low Pay Commission. I suggested Rodney Bickerstaffe—in 2006, the Labour Party was still in power—because I felt that it would be better to have someone with a real commitment to both low-paid families and the national minimum wage.



Unfortunately, the then Labour Government decided that Rodney Bickerstaffe was not the person to lead the Low Pay Commission. Instead, the Government once again appointed someone from the private sector to take on the role. The Low Pay Commission has an important role in setting the national minimum wage, but that role has been hampered by business interests, with their dead hand, ensuring that the minimum wage does not rise in line with the commitments that have been given by the Scottish Government to introduce the living wage for every worker in the government service.

I made a genuine intervention during Jackie Baillie's speech about the setting of the minimum wage. The minimum wage was £3.60 an hour when it was introduced. The trade union movement at the time asked for a rate of £5 an hour, but that was rejected. If we do the calculations using the higher figure, we can see that, if the increases had had the same impact since the minimum wage was introduced, we would now be discussing a minimum wage in excess of £7 an hour. That would have a real impact on people on low incomes.

I find myself more surprised that, according to well-informed commentators, even the present number 10 policy unit realises that any economic growth will not make an impact on all sectors and areas of the economy, particularly for those in low-paid employment. There is even talk of number 10 seriously wanting to examine the possibility of increasing the national minimum wage. As is always the case in British politics, however, the dead hand of the Treasury is apparently resisting such an attempt.

As some members will know, I had a members' business debate at the start of September on the Oxfam report, "Our Economy". One of the many striking statistics in that report referred to the past 25 years, when the incomes of the top 1 per cent of earners in the UK increased by up to 117 per cent in real terms, compared with an increase of just 47 per cent for the poorest 10 per cent.

On the issue of energy prices, I have previously stated in the chamber that ordinary consumers have not so far been best served by the current marketplace for energy, particularly electricity. In the period since 2004, there has been an increase of more than 60 per cent in electricity bills. Along with others, I recognised back in May 2011 that the big six energy companies needed to be held to account by the public for their continual price hikes, particularly in light of the impact that they have on low-income households and on tackling fuel poverty. It was important for the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, of which I was a member at the time, to scrutinise that issue and the pricing behaviour of the energy companies.

At present, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets does not have the power to peg energy prices. I welcome Ed Miliband's commitment to peg those prices if he gets into power, but we have a real opportunity to make changes next year and to set the agenda for the future of Scotland, tackling the real issues of deprivation and poverty and ending once and for all the situation that we have encountered as part of this better together great union that is the United Kingdom. The policies of the past 20 to 30 years have not had a real impact on people living in poverty. When we see fuel poverty increasing today, we must question whether or not there is another way. That other way is a choice for the people of Scotland next year to take real powers into their own hands and get a Government that is prepared to deliver on policies that benefit everyone in society, not just the 1 per cent of top earners.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Before I call Malcolm Chisholm, I advise members that I will have to cut off speeches at six minutes.

15:39

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** The background to the debate is the fact that, in 38 of the past 39 months since the coalition Government was elected, prices have been rising faster than wages. Clearly, some of those factors are beyond the UK Government's or the Scottish Government's control, but the background is that the UK Government's economic policy has failed. That was well summed up by Mark Carney, the new governor of the Bank of England, who obviously is politically independent, when he said:

"fiscal adjustment has been a drag on growth."

Economic failure is really what underlies the problem and the crisis in the cost of living.

Labour and the SNP have responded differently to the situation. Although many of our policy prescriptions might be similar, the SNP has used the issue as part of its constitutional argument, and we had that again in Angela Constance's speech. Another thing that the SNP says as part of its referendum strategy is that, really, there is no alternative at UK level because Labour and the Tories are basically the same. Again, that theme came through in Angela Constance's speech when she said that there was no difference in child poverty under the previous UK Government and the current one. However, that is simply untrue, because child poverty levels fell significantly under the previous Labour Government, as the issue was a priority for it.

If anyone doubted the significant policy differences between Labour and the Conservatives, they were highlighted in the

speeches last week by Ed Miliband, Ed Balls and others. The people of the UK will have a clear choice at the next UK election. Angela Constance said that at least she believes that the energy freeze proposal is well intentioned. I welcome that, because it is not what Mike Weir or any other SNP MP or MSP has said in the past few days. Ms Constance said that it would be better if Ed Miliband had had a better record as energy minister, although I point out that, when he was minister, energy bills fell on average by £100. However, he would of course admit that, at that time, he did not make the fundamental changes that he wants to make and that it is through his experience of the operation of the energy market that he realises that he has to reset that market, which is the other key ingredient of the policy, apart from the price freeze.

That example shows something wider, which is that Ed Miliband is willing to challenge vested interests and to take on and question the neo-liberal consensus. He is making a significant break with that consensus on economic policy. SNP members should look at Labour's economic policy stance at UK level. I would argue that, although it is not traditional socialism, it is radical and it is a left-wing policy that is far to the left of the SNP's economic policy. In general, the SNP is far more comfortable about cosying up to big business. For example, it proposes big cuts in corporation tax.

The exciting announcements that we had last week were not just on energy. The Scottish Government could look closely at childcare. Of course I support the proposal for 600 hours a year of childcare, but that is put in the shade by the proposals of Labour at UK level—which we have said that we would implement if we were the Government in Scotland—for 25 hours a week for any three or four-year-old whose parent is working, and a massive extension of after-school care.

A third example is housing. At UK level, we have been saying that we have to deal with supply, yet housing supply is a red light in the Scottish Government's indicators. The SNP should look carefully at what Labour at UK level is proposing and stop spreading the myth that somehow any Government at Westminster will be the same.

I turn my attention to what the Scottish Government is or should be doing. In general, we want to help the many at the expense of the few. That can be seen in the taxation of the ultra-rich that would be part of the energy and childcare policies. My doubt about the SNP's council tax freeze is that, although it supports the many, it is at the expense of council services, which benefit disproportionately those on lower incomes. That is

why the energy policy is fundamentally different from the council tax freeze policy.

Jackie Baillie and others have talked about how the Scottish Government could do more on fuel poverty, food banks and the bedroom tax, which at present is to the fore in public concerns. At the Finance Committee this morning, in a discussion on the Scottish Government's poverty policy, Jim McCormick of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation said that Scotland does not appear to have a delivery plan for its child poverty strategy.

Studying the 50 indicators that the Scottish Government has, we find that only two are focused on poverty. We know that growth is not the only factor but that the distribution of wealth is also significant, so why is there not an indicator targeting median household disposable income? That would show a concern for the cost of living for the majority of people.

Why is there nothing about poverty in the guidance on single outcome agreements for community planning partnerships? Again, the poverty strategy is not joined up with what is demanded of local authorities. There is a great deal more that the Government could do to focus on poverty in its policy priorities and in its guidance to local authorities.

15:45

**Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** I am pleased to have been called to speak in this afternoon's debate on the cost of living and the impact that it has on hard-pressed families and individuals in Scotland.

I start, as the minister did, with the key issue of child poverty. It is absolutely unacceptable that nearly one child in five in Scotland is being brought up in poverty—one in five children in oil-rich Scotland. What a disgrace, and how inexcusable it is for the no parties—Labour and Tories—to campaign happily together to stop Scotland getting the powers that we need to tackle such inequality in our country.

It is quite clear that in order to create the prosperous and socially just country that Scotland can be, we need control over all our resources to ensure that they are put to work for all our people. It is also quite clear that we need the full toolkit of powers that other independent countries take for granted to tackle inequality, and it is worth noting—

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the member give way?

**Annabelle Ewing:** I would like to make a wee bit more progress, but I will bear in mind that Ms Baillie wants to intervene.

Countries such as Denmark and Norway—both independent countries with similar populations to Scotland—have child poverty levels of less than 10 per cent. That is not 0 per cent, which is where I would like to go, but it is certainly much better than being subject to the policies of Westminster, where we see the UK being the fourth most unequal country in the developed world.

I shall take Ms Baillie's intervention now, if she still wishes to speak.

**Jackie Baillie:** Does Annabelle Ewing acknowledge that child poverty fell by a greater extent in Scotland in the first two sessions of the Scottish Parliament than it has done since, and that it is therefore not just about powers but about the priorities that Government applies to things?

**Annabelle Ewing:** I thank Ms Baillie for her intervention. Ultimately, it is all to do with power and who controls the resources, which affects the decisions that we are able to make. Of course, it is interesting to note that the Institute for Fiscal Studies report, "Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2011" found that income inequality rose during the 13 years of Labour Government in Westminster across a range of potential measures, so we should remember history and not seek to rewrite the facts.

With a yes vote in September 2014, ending child poverty is truly one of the big prizes of independence for Scotland. In the meantime, the SNP Scottish Government is doing all that it can within the limited powers currently available to help people through these tough economic times. That can be seen in the continuing commitment to the social wage, which is helping folk who are striving to keep one step ahead, to juggle the household finances and to come out on top week in, week out. That is the challenge that faces them.

We have heard this afternoon about the council tax freeze, which has been in place for the past six years in a row and which makes a big difference to people because it is the one bill that they know will not go up when they look at all their other household bills. It is also a big relief compared with what went before, because when we had Labour and the Liberals in power we saw a staggering 60 per cent-plus increase in council tax bills.

**Patrick Harvie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Annabelle Ewing:** No, thank you.

It is certainly clear to folk that the massive council tax hike under Labour did nothing whatever to help people deal with the increasing costs of living.

Another key aspect of the social wage commitment that the SNP Government has made to the people of Scotland is the abolition of the tax on ill health that was prescription charges. The SNP was proud to go back to the founding principles of our national health service and to make the NHS truly free at the point of need. I have to ask the critics of that help—it is difficult to believe that there are critics of that help for hard-pressed individuals and families who are struggling with the increasing costs of living—what kind of world they live in, where they think that helping people with conditions that require constant prescriptions and who are earning less than £16,000 a year is somehow providing immense subsidy and largesse. What utter nonsense. It shows a lack of real understanding of the challenges that individuals are facing.

Many other aspects of the social wage will be touched on this afternoon, such as free personal nursing care, free NHS eye examinations, education based on the ability to learn not the ability to pay, concessionary bus travel and the abolition of bridge tolls. I could go on. All those measures are in place now and are making an impact on people's lives. They allow people to keep more of their own money in their pockets. We should not, of course, forget the SNP Government's commitment to introduce the living wage wherever possible, the no compulsory redundancies policy or the efforts that we are making to mitigate the Westminster Government's welfare reforms.

It is clear that, although the Government is straining every sinew to help people through difficult times with the powers that it has, we need the powers that every other country takes for granted. Who would be content simply to mitigate the decisions of others? Rather, we should take those decisions ourselves. Since 1945, 140 countries have chosen independence and not one of them has ever asked to give it up again. That is the way forward for Scotland. It is the way to create a prosperous and fair society. It is the better future for Scotland, and all we have to do is say yes.

15:51

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** I will make a few remarks about child poverty and childcare.

The key to decent childcare is the fact that it addresses child poverty. It is key to economic growth and gender equality. I say to Angela Constance and Annabelle Ewing that they need to go back and look at the independent statistics. Child poverty fell under Labour between 1999 and 2005. It then stabilised, and then the SNP came into power and child poverty went up. Child poverty has only ever gone down under Labour

and up under the SNP. I am afraid that that is a fact that they cannot deny.

I encourage the Government to take a moment to look at Save the Children's recent report "Give Us a Hand with Childcare", which contains 10 key messages from parents throughout Scotland about what childcare means to them and how it must be best delivered to benefit their lives. Four key points from that report stood out for me: the cost of childcare is too high, particularly for low-income parents; parents have a strong desire to work but feel trapped by the cost of childcare; flexibility is key; and childcare is a particular challenge for parents who wish to study.

I will take those clear messages to the scrutiny of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. There are 100 voices in the Save the Children report, all clearly stating what they want from the childcare provision that the Government is introducing. The Government has, of course, said that it will extend childcare to 600 hours for looked-after two-year-olds and for all three and four-year-olds. The Scottish Labour Party supports that move, presuming that it is properly funded.

The SNP made that promise in 2007. Six years on, we are still waiting for that to happen. The Government tells us that we now need a bill to make it happen, which is why we are legislating, so I was a bit surprised to see the SNP tweeting this morning an infographic, no doubt connected to the Dunfermline by-election, in which it says that it has saved families £701 a year—the minister used the same figure in her opening speech—by delivering 600 hours of free childcare. I would love to hear from the minister how come, six years on, with the bill to deliver 600 hours still going through the Parliament, she is putting out leaflets saying that it has already happened.

Just for the record, I note that there is no response.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** Will Kezia Dugdale give way?

**Kezia Dugdale:** I would love to hear the answer from Mr Gibson.

**Kenneth Gibson:** The 600 hours was a 2011 commitment, not a 2007 commitment. It will be 187.5 hours more than Labour provided in the eight years that it was in power.

**Kezia Dugdale:** I am afraid that Kenneth Gibson is incorrect. If he goes back to his office and looks up his party's 2007 manifesto, he will see a clear commitment to the 600 hours. It will be seven years on—August 2014—before his Government delivers the 600 hour commitment, so I do not know quite why the SNP is putting out leaflets and tweeting all over Twitter that it has already happened. It is the type of deeply cynical

politics about which I talked in the chamber last week.

In that same speech, I brought up the issue of payday loans, and I will do so again today. I make no apology for that, and I will do it again and again until the Government listens and decides to do something about the issue. A recent survey of what people use payday loans for showed that the vast majority of people—more than for any other purpose—used payday loans to buy food and pay bills. That is a shocking statistic. I have thrown hundreds of statistics at the Government on the problem of payday loans and all the things that it could do about it, and they have fallen on deaf ears.

I want to tell the Government briefly a story about one of my constituents, who is a guy called James. If members want to see the full story of James's experiences, they can go on to my website and see a full 10-minute interview. A year and a half ago, James borrowed £200 to buy extra Christmas presents. He could not keep up with repaying the £200 debt, so he took out another payday loan to pay off the first one. Within a matter of months, he had £5,000-worth of debt to five different payday lenders. Every single penny of his wage—I remind the Government that his wage was not insubstantial—went out to pay payday loan debt. It all disappeared from his bank account through continuous payment authorities. The guy was on the edge of bankruptcy, but the Government has absolutely nothing to say to him. I have put forward dozens of ideas to the Government.

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** Will the member spell out to us what she thinks should be done?

**Kezia Dugdale:** I would be delighted to send Mr Mason every speech that I have made on the topic in the chamber. Perhaps he might then listen.

Glasgow City Council's action is a fantastic example of action that can be taken on payday loans. It has 20 different recommendations on the issue, one of which was released three weeks ago. That recommendation was to slash the rents and business rates of payday loan companies' alternatives, credit unions. That is just one of 20 things that Glasgow City Council is doing.

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

**Kezia Dugdale:** No, thank you.

I ask the Government to do one thing. I see the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing in his place. He spends millions of pounds every year on health warnings. Through the social advertising budget, he tells people, "Don't drink too much. Don't eat fatty foods. Eat five fruit and veg a day." On several occasions, I have put to the

Government an idea for wealth warnings. I want to see leadership from the Government. I want it to stand up and say, "Payday loans are bad for you. There are alternatives, and there are debt advice services that you can access." *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Kezia Dugdale:** The cabinet secretary can do that with the powers that he has, but time and again, the Government is not willing to act. For far too many families around the country, there is far too much month left at the end of the money, and the Government has nothing to say to them. That is an absolute scandal.

If the Government does one thing in the run-up to Christmas, it should speak out against payday loan companies and give people a chance of a better future that is not built on the debt that the cabinet secretary is quite happy to sit back and watch build up.

15:57

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** SNP members know, of course, that the powers to really deal with the payday loan companies are reserved to Westminster, and Kezia Dugdale and her colleagues do not want us to have them. In 2010, I lodged a motion that called for the then Labour Government to deal with those high interest charges, and not a single Labour MSP dealt with it. There is nothing but cynical hypocrisy from the Labour member.

Kezia Dugdale talked about child poverty. We have 10.9 per cent less in resources to deal with child poverty than we inherited.

**Kezia Dugdale:** Will the member give way?

**Kenneth Gibson:** I will let you in, Kezia, because you let me in, but let me make progress first.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Full names, please.

**Kenneth Gibson:** The cost of living is a pressing issue for families and individuals. Unemployment is too high; benefits are under attack from the coalition; the UK state pension is one of the worst in Europe relative to wages; fuel costs are among the highest in the world; and many who are in work face real-terms wage cuts and reduced working hours. No one would deny that, since the recession, people across these islands have had to make a lot less go a lot further.

Even before the recession struck, household incomes were under threat from the then UK Labour Government. The "Why do we feel so broke?" report, which was published on 4 February 2008, showed that the average UK

disposable family income after tax and housing costs, having declined from £16,544 in 2003 to £16,305 in 2006, plummeted to £15,231 in 2007. The fall of 6.6 per cent in a single year at a time of strong worldwide economic growth shows the economic incompetence of Labour in power. By contrast, despite increasingly difficult Westminster budget settlements, the SNP Government has achieved much since 2007.

The Labour motion rightly points to areas in which costs have soared, of which energy and childcare are two examples. It also says:

"both the UK and Scottish governments must act urgently to tackle these issues."

Again, there is little to argue with there, but the track records of both Governments are markedly different.

Restrictions that are imposed on the Scottish Government severely limit what we are able to do—a situation that those on the no benches are reluctant to change. Nevertheless, the council tax freeze has saved average households up to £1,600, whereas in England council tax bills have risen year on year. In North Ayrshire, where I am an MSP, Labour raised the council tax by 75 per cent in the decade to 2007, while water and sewerage bills soared by an astonishing 592 per cent.

Lest we forget, fuel duty in the first three years of the Blair Government was increased by 6 per cent each year above the rate of inflation, making our economy increasingly uncompetitive, which is no doubt one of the reasons why Scotland lost 37 per cent of its manufacturing employment while Labour was in power.

Scotland would undoubtedly be hit by further tax hikes were Labour in power, but no one really knows. Indeed, I doubt that many Labour members have a clue as to what their council tax policy is—this week. In 2010, the then Labour leader, Iain Gray, said that the council tax freeze was "unsustainable", but he reversed his position prior to the election, saying that

"now is not the time to increase the burden on household budgets."

That of course begs the question: when is the right time?

**Iain Gray:** I would like to ask what the SNP's policy on local taxation is. I believe that it is still to introduce the local income tax. Can the member confirm that for me?

**Kenneth Gibson:** The SNP policy is indeed to introduce, when the time is right, a local income tax—of course it is. We have frozen council tax, but Labour is a yo-yo party on the issue. For example, Glasgow City Council has pledged to

freeze the council tax for a year longer than this Government will be in office.

Labour introduced tuition fees, forcing many young people who wanted to go to university to save or go into debt, but the SNP Government reintroduced the proud tradition of access to education based on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay. Our commitment to free school meals, a living wage, maintaining the bus pass for older people and the abolition of prescription charges has helped to ease the strain on household budgets at this difficult time. In Johann Lamont's view, those services are part of a "something for nothing" culture—a phrase used at the Tory conference yesterday by Iain Duncan Smith—and all are under the scrutiny of her cuts commission. For Labour to demand that the SNP Government do more to reduce the cost of living, when Labour consistently attacks or threatens to reverse the very measures helping so many Scots, beggars belief.

The real power to reduce the cost of living lies at Westminster. Control over energy policy is key to reducing fuel costs; radical benefit reform would help those struggling to find work; and a decent pension would allow our older people to enjoy later life without worrying about heating their homes or eating properly. If they are serious about addressing the cost of living, why do Opposition MSPs not want the tools for us to do the job here, instead of tinkering around the edges to try to mitigate the impact of UK Governments?

Labour tells us that it will deliver change, but it never does. On Labour's watch, the UK became one of the most unequal countries in the developed world. Labour's claim to be progressive is a myth debunked many years ago, as the Iraq war, Trident, retention of the House of Lords, tuition fees and trickle-down economics attest.

Last week, Ed Miliband promised to take action on energy companies. One wonders what his plan is, how effective it will be and, importantly, why he did not address those matters when in power. Ed Miliband was, of course, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change for two years, but to say that it was ineffective does not begin to describe his tenure in office—although on taking up his post, he did, very politely, ask the big six energy companies to take voluntary action to ensure that prices were fair.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is in his final minute.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Age Concern and National Energy Action slated Labour for failing to protect the poorest and most vulnerable from high energy bills. Ed Miliband's own department's figures show

that fuel poverty continued to rise, and Westminster's Energy and Climate Change Committee reported that the Labour Government would miss its own fuel poverty reduction targets. What a record!

Figures from the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets show that, during the 13 years of the Labour UK Government, average prices rose by 48 per cent but gas bills increased by 67 per cent and electricity increased by a whopping 139 per cent. It is astonishing that Labour demands action to reduce the cost of living, given its abysmal record in government and opposition.

The SNP Government is doing what it can within the powers that we have, but Scots should vote yes to change that situation. I say to Labour that it is not what its members say in the chamber now that matters but what it did in government. Unless Labour plans to reverse Tory cuts, its words are meaningless; and unless Labour tells us how it will fund that, its rhetoric is empty.

**Lewis Macdonald:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member must finish.

**Kenneth Gibson:** We have Labour speeches, but what about action rather than speeches?

I notice that Lewis Macdonald wanted to come in after my six minutes were up. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Let me just apologise to Kezia Dugdale, as I said that I would take an intervention from her but unfortunately I did not manage to do so.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid to tell members that we are going to lose a member from this debate because we are well over time.

16:03

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** The action that the previous Labour Government took was to reduce child poverty. It is nonsensical of SNP members to pretend that that somehow did not happen.

In recent weeks and months, a number of people have said to me that Scottish politics is dominated by the on-going referendum debate. Indeed, the Scottish Government has used time in the chamber in recent weeks to debate the one-year-to-go point until Scots have their say on that question. No one on the Labour side underestimates the importance of the referendum, but I think that, across the chamber, we would all regret any impression that the Parliament is not focused on the day-to-day issues that affect the

lives of people whom we represent. I hope that this Labour debate goes some way towards redressing the balance.

The cost of living crisis that is hitting households across Scotland and the UK is the issue that dominated my surgeries this summer. Lynn is a woman who came to a surgery that I held in Partick, and her story is fairly typical of many people I have met. She was forced to give up her work as a supervisor in a busy shop to care for her elderly mother. Lynn's mum unfortunately died in January, and since then Lynn has been unable to find another job—and I mean any other job. Lynn did the right thing by caring for her mum herself—she saved the state money—but now she feels that she is being punished, and life is getting harder for her each and every month.

We know that the impact of the global financial crash and recession has been felt the hardest and longest by those who are furthest removed from the questions of financial regulation. It has been bank workers and not bank executives who have felt the most pain. Those who have lost their jobs in banking, manufacturing and retail and the 49,000 people who have lost their jobs in public services have suffered. Those who were already furthest from the labour market have been penalised heavily, and even for those who are in work, exploitation has been the hallmark of the recovery, such as it is. Zero-hours contracts, reduced hours and pay freezes have been the reward for many of those who are in work, while those who are looking for a job have been encouraged or in some cases compelled to provide their labour without pay.

At best, that means people having less money in their purses and wallets, putting off home moves or improvements and missing out on holidays, but at worst it means people struggling to clothe their children for the new school term and to put food on the table. At the same time, we have seen childcare become less and less affordable, and it is now less affordable in Scotland than in any other part of the United Kingdom.

Prices have risen in the shops and on our household bills. Despite falls in wholesale energy prices, the cost of heating a home this winter will take up a larger and larger proportion of incomes. When it comes to a basket of essentials in the supermarket, the JRF has put the rise in what is paid at the till at some 25 per cent over just five years, as I think Jackie Baillie said. Demand for food banks has risen by 35 per cent in the same period, and a fifth of those who access them are in work.

Since 2010, average wages in Scotland have fallen by £27.30 a week. Public sector workers are emerging from a pay freeze with a 1 per cent increase, or 2 per cent for those who already earn

the least, and yet the CPI is at 2.8 per cent and the RPI is at 3.3 per cent. Declining incomes and rising costs add up to a cost-of-living crisis for real people and not just a problem or an opportunity for politicians.

The question for the Scottish Parliament is how we respond and how we use the powers that the people have entrusted to us to act in their interests. All the political parties are thinking about how we will respond to those problems after the referendum or after the next election, but the crisis is not a challenge of tomorrow. It is one for today, and our response should be an urgent one.

That is where I take issue with the Scottish Government's amendment, because the truth is that the Scottish Government has nothing new to say. What we have heard is a restatement of policies that were debated during the 2007 election or policies that were introduced by the previous Labour-led Government before 2007.

We need to evaluate what is already being done in terms of the regulation of costs, and spending to help people. We must consider whether those things are working or whether some effects of the policies are unintended or contrary to our objectives and whether reprioritisation is possible or needed. We also need to set out what more could and should be done. There are plenty of things that we should be doing, including extending the living wage, taking action on zero-hours contracts and making the case for training that leads to better quality work. Those steps are all vital and I agree with what has already been said about them.

An answer to a parliamentary question that I received, which was published in yesterday's written answers report, states that no assessment has been made of how extensively zero-hours contracts are being used in colleges and universities, which are some of the biggest employers in the city that I represent. There has been no assessment of whether they are primarily used for teaching and academic staff or whether it is cleaners, technicians, maintenance workers and cooks in canteens who are on them. If we do not even know how many people are being asked to work in a university without knowing how many hours they might get next week, what hope do we have of creating decent employment in other sectors of the economy?

Fuel poverty, which others have mentioned, is significantly the responsibility of the Scottish Government, and its commitment to tackling the issue is regularly extolled. I welcome every penny that is spent on helping the one in three Scots who live in fuel poverty. However, one of the first decisions to be taken after the election that brought me here was to cut the fuel poverty budget and to remove universal provision of the

central heating programme—universal provision which SNP members have praised in other areas.

I finish by mentioning a policy that was announced at the Labour conference last week—Labour's proposal to freeze energy bills. Would the SNP support the next Labour Government on that or would it implement a similar plan in an independent Scotland? That is the key question in this debate.

Members know my views and those of other Labour members on the SNP's plans to cut corporation tax for big businesses. Will the minister tell us, in closing, how the SNP can justify cutting tax for energy companies while taking no action on the bills that they demand of their customers? If the question cannot be answered in this debate, I am afraid that it will become a big issue in the run-up to the referendum on 18 September next year.

16:10

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** I thank the Labour Party for bringing this important subject for debate.

Members received a number of briefings, including one from the Child Poverty Action Group—an organisation that I think very highly of. I agree with the direction of travel in CPAG's briefing, which talks about the need to maximise income and minimise essential outgoings for families in Scotland.

I was particularly disappointed to read in the briefing that 20 per cent of children still live in poverty and that the number is forecast to rise by 65,000 by 2020. The Child Poverty Act 2010, which I think that all members supported—in the Scottish Parliament and at Westminster—was meant to cut child poverty to 10 per cent by 2020. Even that target was unambitious, given that the rate in other European countries is well below 10 per cent. At the time, people warned that Westminster legislation without resources would not eradicate child poverty. That has, I am sad to say, proven to be the case.

On maximising income, the living wage is good but a statutory minimum wage is better. We struggle to get people to sign up to a voluntary living wage, whereas a statutory minimum wage is compulsory in the private and public sectors. People need a minimum to live on—we give that to prisoners and we should give that to everyone else. Part of someone's income should be unconditional; only income on top of the unconditional element should be conditional. That is why it is so wrong to take money off people who have an extra bedroom, taking their income below the level that they need to live on. It is similarly

wrong to make someone attend a job centre five days a week before they can get their benefits.

To members who say that independence is a distraction from the main issues, such as poverty and the cost of living, I respond that I want independence so that we can stop struggling to impose a voluntary living wage and instead increase the statutory minimum wage to a proper level, on which people can actually live.

**Drew Smith:** I am interested in what the member said. Will he say whether that is Scottish National Party policy? At what level would the SNP set the minimum wage?

**John Mason:** I am happy to argue that the statutory minimum wage should be £7.45, in line with the living wage. I do not think that anyone has fixed a figure for the minimum wage, but when I was at Westminster we repeatedly spoke in favour of a higher statutory minimum wage.

We can hardly talk about reducing people's outgoings without considering where the extra money is to come from—the issue has already come up. Is a free healthy lunch for rich kids the best use of resources? Where is the money to come from for more childcare?

Let us not forget that good things are happening in relation to energy, albeit sometimes on a small scale. The Commonwealth games village has a district heating system and the new homes have higher insulation levels—members who go to see the new homes will see that they have tiny radiators. That will be the case for some 700 homes, a number of which will be socially rented. That is good news, but on a relatively small scale. It is not yet economically viable to build such homes, which are subsidised by the public purse.

Energy costs are not helped by the profit element. It would have been better if gas and electricity had not been privatised—I did not take any shares when they were privatised. I have reservations about whether Labour can deliver an energy price freeze. There is a fear that a freeze would stifle investment in our future energy requirements and that companies would dramatically raise prices before the freeze came into effect.

The Scottish Government, in partnership with local government, has delivered a council tax freeze. Of course if council tax were raised there would be more money for services, but we should remember that the tax is regressive, as Drew Smith said. Council tax increases hit hardest the people who are on a limited income, such as pensioners, so freezing council tax helps people who are on a fixed income.

**Drew Smith:** Will the member give way?



**John Mason:** I have already given way to the member.

In the longer term, we want to replace the council tax with something fairer that is based on the ability to pay; nonetheless, in the meantime, a freeze is very welcome.

There are some good points in some of the amendments. For example, the Greens demand waste reduction, and we should definitely go down that route. The Lib Dem amendment mentions overseas aid, which may be slightly off the point of the motion, but every time we talk about poverty we should remember those around the world who are in a much poorer state than we are.

I will make a few comments on the exchange rate. One of the reasons for costs going up is that the value of the pound has been falling, and the value of the pound has fallen because the economy has been badly managed over a number of years. There was much rejoicing when the pound fell from around 70p to the euro to more like 80p as that was meant to boost exports—although I do not think that we have seen much growth in practice, at least at a UK level. However, the falling exchange rate has meant that anything imported now costs more, and for this country that means that quite a lot of things cost more. Although we may accept that some aspects of the increased cost of living are outwith the control of all Governments, we must be clear that the mismanagement of the economy by successive Westminster Governments is a major factor.

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

**John Mason:** Let us make dealing with poverty a key focus in the Parliament, but if we are to hear new proposals from other parties let us have clear and costed alternatives as we move through the budget process.

16:16

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Labour is due credit for bringing this debate on the cost of living to the Parliament. It seems that during this conference season the political parties have been tripping over each other to send the message, "In tough economic times, we're on your side."

Labour's policy of the energy price cap is intriguing. It is probably popular and perhaps even achievable, but it will certainly be a short-term measure. The Labour Party is not proposing national ownership; therefore, in a free market competitive arrangement price caps would be a short-term measure only. However, I do not know whether I support that measure yet because I have not seen any of the detail. Even after spending some time searching for an explanation,

I still do not know whether it is a retail or wholesale cap. If it is a retail cap, it will freeze out suppliers such as the Co-op, which the Labour Party welcomed when it entered the energy market.

**Iain Gray:** For Patrick Harvie's information, I say that it would be a retail freeze, but included in the proposal is major reform of the wholesale market, too. It is, indeed, a temporary measure that will allow time to legislate to replace Ofgem with a regulator that has the power to regulate prices. It is a short-term measure until we can introduce a long-term policy.

**Patrick Harvie:** I will be interested to learn about the long-term policy when the detail is available. I still wonder, however, what will happen to the retailers that are not also energy generators if a price cap is in place on the retail side and the wholesale price goes up.

The Liberal Democrat amendment talks about increasing tax thresholds, but I am afraid that I cannot agree that that is progressive. Every member of this Parliament is in the top 2 per cent of society by income and will benefit from that.

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** Is Patrick Harvie aware that the threshold for higher-rate tax was reduced to pay for it? Those of us who are higher-rate taxpayers are paying for the increase in the lower-rate tax threshold.

**Patrick Harvie:** There was nothing to prevent the Conservatives from taking more from higher earners and approving that measure as well. Only £1 billion of the £17 billion that that policy raised has been spent on removing low earners from tax, and nothing has been gained by the poorest people in society.

SNP members have talked about the social wage, and I welcome many of the measures under that banner heading. Nevertheless, I do not welcome the council tax freeze because, as with other examples of freezing a regressive tax, every member in the chamber has saved money through the council tax freeze. All of us who are well paid and who are in the top fraction of society by income have saved money. That is the problem.

**Mark McDonald:** Will Patrick Harvie give way?

**Patrick Harvie:** I do not have time.

The SNP should acknowledge that the many positive policies under the social wage headline need to be paid for. I would be willing to pay more tax. Every member in the chamber and anybody on a comparable income can afford to pay substantially more tax. I want Scandinavian public services and Scandinavian levels of taxation to pay for them.

The Conservatives seem to be obsessed with the marriage tax break, which will save the

handsome sum of £4 a week for around a third of married and civil-partnered couples, but will exclude many of those who are most in need. Its real intention is clearly to underline a mean-spirited and judgmental moral hierarchy rather than to help those who are most in need.

Even where those policies are well-intentioned they all risk achieving only marginal effect. The problem is one of chronic inequality, which has, as other members have mentioned, been growing since the late 1970s. This inequality matters more than GDP because far more people benefit if we share the wealth of our country than if we grow that wealth overall. The problem is also about our having a culture of waste and overconsumption, even by those who can afford it the least but who are left with little choice.

The solutions will often be found in demand reduction, the creation of capacity for self-reliance, and in a change in economic relationships in order to break the stranglehold of multinational companies. I offer food as one example. The dominance of the retail giants may well mean that a few loss leaders are offered, but only when people are bombarded with advertising that tells them to buy overpriced, overprocessed and unhealthy products as well. The decline in food skills in our society, coupled with the decline in the time that many people have available to grow, prepare and cook their own food is another element that results in the change in people's relationship with food, from its being a form of nourishment and a natural product to a commercial product on which they rely.

Similar dominance by a handful of multinationals and big businesses can be seen in energy, banking and many other sectors of our economy. Often the solutions will be found in government action. I do not have time to talk about the many benefits of land value taxation in reducing housing costs, or about the role that private rented sector rent controls, allied to social housing supply, could and should play.

I end by recalling Jackie Baillie's condemnation of the SNP and the campaign for independence and her call instead for a change of UK Government. I ask only this: did we not try that already?

16:22

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** I am at that stage in my family life when I have become a taxi driver for my own kids.

**James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** A people carrier.

**Ken Macintosh:** I suspect that some people will recognise the description; it is clear that James

Dornan does. Other younger parents might view that with a slight sense of foreboding, although I say in mitigation that it is not that bad because it is sometimes the only chance I get to catch up with some members of the family. The big downside is cost; it cost me £98 to fill up the car this weekend. It is a seven-seater—I have a lot of kids. It does not seem so long since I was horrified when a full tank went above £50, but it is now double that.

Families across Scotland are feeling the pinch in this recession. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, research from Shelter and government statistics all tell the same story. I want, however, to highlight another report—the “Asda Income Tracker”—because it is impossible not to notice the rise in the weekly cost of shopping, of heating the house and of getting to work by bus, train or car. As I said in the debate on the economy last week, the Asda study reveals that the average Scottish household is £990 a year worse off than it was five years ago. That is bad enough, but we are considerably poorer than the UK average where the average household is approximately £870 a year worse off.

It is worth highlighting a few of the other findings in the Asda report: transport costs are up £654 a year, compared with 2008, and housing and utility bills are up 25 per cent since 2008. The under-30s have been hardest hit, with discretionary income going down approximately 5 per cent over the past five years. Since 2010, wages have, on average, been growing at half the rate of inflation. Even more worrying is that the study forecasts that the cost of living will continue to rise, and will reach almost 18 per cent higher over the next five years. That means that by 2018, the average UK household could be £1,300 a year worse off.

What can we do about that? The party conferences laid out pretty starkly the political choices that we face. We could accept the reality that unregulated free markets do not serve any of us very well. We could intervene on the side of the consumers, the workers and the citizens of this country with, for example, a price freeze on our home heating bills, a new approach to public transport ownership or regulation, and a decisive statement of intent to support small indigenous businesses over large unaccountable corporations.

Alternatively, we could, of course, listen to what is being said at this week's Tory conference and try to find some scapegoats—some people to turn on and to blame for our communal misfortunes. We could blame immigrants and send round vans to tell them all to go home. We could blame criminals and threaten to punish them further if they dare to muck up their prison cells. Better still, why not blame the unemployed and treat them like criminals? Let us make them pick up litter or do

community service for the misfortune of not being able to find a job. In fact, given that it is all their fault, let us just go the whole hog and take away their human rights. It is, of course, impossible to believe that we would ever need human rights to protect any of us.

Unfortunately, we do not have to wait until the next Conservative election manifesto—the damage is already being done. Child benefit has been frozen and other benefits for families and children are rising by just 1 per cent. The Child Poverty Action Group has pointed out that

“currently, one in five, that’s 200,000 of Scotland’s children, are officially recognised as living in poverty”.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies forecasts further massive increases in child poverty—it is estimated that 65,000 more children in Scotland will be living in poverty by 2020.

I have talked previously about how devolution has given Scotland the opportunity to become a beacon for progressive policies. It has allowed us to resist market-driven reforms to our health service, to maintain equity in our education system and to support independence in retirement through free travel and free personal care. Although we spend much of our time disagreeing, we need look only at the most recent Labour and SNP election manifestos to see that there is a lot of common ground, too. I appeal to the Scottish Government to join us on policies that will deliver real and immediate benefits to the Scottish people and which will make a difference to our cost of living today—not in some hypothetical post-2016 world. For example, bus regulation and the awarding of the rail franchise are areas in which ministers have powers at their disposal right now. We could take decisions that would help to keep services running in the interests of passengers, not of shareholders, and which would keep prices down.

**Mark McDonald:** I simply say to Mr Macintosh that, given that he lost the finance brief on the basis that he went against the rhetoric of his leader and supported our social wage policies, perhaps he should join us.

**Ken Macintosh:** I will take that as an olive branch from the SNP. It gives me optimism, so I will make another suggestion to Mr McDonald and his colleagues, which relates to community ownership of renewables. Why are there so few examples of community-owned wind farms when on paper, at least, we all support an extension of the policy? Instead of just subsidising a few community initiatives, we have an opportunity to address fuel poverty directly and to take ownership of energy generation, which is responsible for one of the largest cost-of-living increases in recent years. I ask the minister to look

at the role that housing associations can play in that area.

What worries me is that, despite our common ground, we seem to be unable to reach common solutions. Just yesterday, the Welfare Reform Committee discussed the bedroom tax.

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

**Ken Macintosh:** I will, Presiding Officer.

The majority of members on the committee and the members of the expert group were united in our condemnation of the policy. My question is this: why do not we do something about it now? We have the powers, and we have the vehicle in my colleague Jackie Baillie’s proposed bill, which would make a real difference to the cost of living of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

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

**Ken Macintosh:** We cannot wait until 2016. By then, it will be too late. People will have been chucked out of their houses, or worse.

16:28

**James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** I have been intrigued by the debate so far. I never realised that there were so many closet nationalists on the other side of the chamber; every argument I have heard has been an argument for independence. Members have talked about the evils of welfare reform, the low level of child benefit and the issue of energy controls, which are all things that are outwith our control. It is because Westminster controls those things that we are in the situation that we are in. Despite that, Jackie Baillie and her colleagues say, “Come on, Alex and Angela. Get your act together and get this sorted.”

Let us get real. We will get the powers that we seek next year. The reality is that we are not obsessed with the referendum; we are obsessed with Scotland getting the powers that it requires so that it can be the country that it should be.

I will move on to what Kezia Dugdale said, because if I do not she will never forgive me or Kenny Gibson, who did not manage to get to her. Everyone knows the work that Kezia Dugdale has done on payday loans and how passionate and caring she is on the matter—I also note the cross-party work that is being carried out on it—but I have to be honest and say that she was making the case for independence. I accept that there are some things that the Scottish Government can and will try to do, but the only way we can get rid of payday loans is to have the powers to do so.

**Kezia Dugdale:** The SNP and the Labour Party agree that capping the cost of credit is the single thing that could be done to address the payday loan industry. In last week's debate, I asked the SNP how it would do that in an independent country if we had the same currency, the Bank of England as the bank of last resort and the same financial regulation system, which it has said we would have. If we had the same financial regulation system as the UK, how would the SNP cut down on payday loan companies?

**James Dornan:** I am sorry, but that is not an argument for anything. Kezia Dugdale is saying that things are bad at the moment, but let us just keep them that way. What we are saying is this: let us get the powers and then change things. We do not have the powers to change payday loan regulation just now, but we will have them after next September. [*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** One at a time, please. It is the member on his or her feet who does the talking.

**James Dornan:** The motion asks the UK Government and the Scottish Government to do what they can urgently to tackle the underlying issues that increase the cost of living, so I want to focus on specific measures that the Scottish Government is taking in reaction to the rise in the cost of living. Although the costs of childcare, which have been mentioned a number of times, are rising far above the increase in inflation, the Scottish Government has already increased free nursery provision by 20 per cent since 2007, and our Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill will ensure a minimum of 600 hours of free flexible learning and childcare for all three and four-year-olds and all looked-after two-year-olds. It will be the best nursery care package in the UK; it will benefit about 120,000 children in Scotland and will on average save families £700 a year. Where this Scottish Government has the power to make changes to ease the cost of living through changes to childcare, it is already doing so.

I also want to touch on the introduction of the living wage. As my colleagues have mentioned, the Joseph Rowntree report notes that it is impossible to achieve a minimum standard of living on benefits other than pension credit, and that it is nigh on impossible to achieve that on the minimum wage and that a living wage would provide just the amount that would be needed to meet the minimum living standard. The Scottish Government cannot compel either the private sector or all the public sector to introduce a living wage—that power still rests with Westminster—but where it can, this Government has seen to it that a living wage is paid as a minimum. The SNP is committed to a living wage, although I note that

no similar commitment was forthcoming from Ed Miliband in last week's conference speech.

As my colleagues have pointed out, the Rowntree report also touches on council tax rises across the rest of the UK as being one of the core reasons for the soaring cost of living. That is not applicable to Scotland, where the council tax has been frozen since 2007—since 2005 in Glasgow—and will continue to be frozen for the lifetime of this Parliament. The policy continues to benefit those who are in the lowest income bracket who are, because they have much less financial security and freedom, most affected by the soaring cost of living. Scottish Labour's position on the council tax freeze—a policy that is having demonstrable benefits in the purses of ordinary working Scots—is, like most of its other policies, muddled. In fact, Drew Smith has this afternoon showed Labour's confusion over the issue. Was he saying that council tax should rise?

To be fair, such flip-flopping can be seen not only in relation to the council tax. One day, Labour clearly supports the bedroom tax—after all, it originally introduced it for the private sector—and the next it does not. Labour members were told that they could not say whether or not they support it, but now they have been told that they can say that they are against it. Who knows how long the current position will stick? I suppose that that will depend on Ed.

As with the bedroom tax, many of the foundations on which the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition has built its harmful policies, which in turn are contributing to the astronomical rise in the cost of living, were laid by the Labour Party at Westminster between 1997 and 2010. That is why under Labour the gap between rich and poor increased more than it had ever increased before. Members do not have to take my word for it; they just need to look at Liam Byrne's comments about the Tories' latest bash the poor scheme, which Ken Macintosh alluded to when he was trying to attack the Tories in his speech. Mr Byrne quite rightly claimed that it is just a rehash of Labour's jobs guarantee policy. We can see that we could get hardly a fag paper between the two main unionist parties.

The coalition's expansion of those policies is having a huge impact not only on the cost of living for people across the UK, but on their standards of living. We cannot look at one without looking at the other, and the Rowntree report makes it clear that standards of living will continue to fall for many people because of the proposals that have been outlined by the Conservative and Lib Dem Government.

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

**James Dornan:** When we get told by the rich Conservative minister Lord Freud that he cannot say whether the rise in people presenting at food banks is because of failures by the Department for Work and Pensions or because food banks provide an opportunity to get free food, we realise just how far removed from reality those who make the decisions about welfare are.

The Scottish Government is clearly making changes to help people.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close, Mr Dornan.

**James Dornan:** The Scottish Government cannot, however, continue to mitigate the situation indefinitely. I believe that the time is coming when the people of Scotland will look for change, and that they will vote yes to independence next year to ensure that Parliament has the power to make the policy changes that are needed to ameliorate the worst effects.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mark McDonald has four and a half minutes.

16:34

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP):** I was not expecting to be called so quickly. I will try to get through my speech in four and a half minutes.

In his report “Constitutional change and inequality in Scotland”, Professor David Bell noted that

“raising Council Taxes actually raises inequality”.

We have it there that the council tax freeze is helping the people who are at the lower end, because the proportion of their income that they spend on council tax is greater than the proportion that those at the higher end of the income scale spend. The council tax freeze prevents people who are at the lower end from facing a greater burden as a result of rising council taxes, which benefits them.

I was interested in Ken Macintosh’s point about community ownership of renewables, on which we probably find common cause. When I was a list MSP, I visited the community wind turbine in the parish of Udney, which is just outside Aberdeen. That turbine is being used to generate income for the community, which is being distributed via local groups. Community renewables can also be used in other ways—for example, to reduce energy costs rather than to generate income. That needs to be looked at. Good work is being done on community renewables, but we might need to look at how to expand that.

I represent a constituency in a city that is, on the face of it, very wealthy. Aberdeen has a high

employment rate, a low unemployment rate and a low long-term unemployment rate. However, that masks some of the poverty in the city. Members who came to campaign in the Donside by-election will be aware of some of the deprived communities in my constituency. Those areas feel the sharp end of some of the cost-of-living issues that we are discussing.

Good work is done in my constituency by a range of organisations that are dedicating effort to assisting people who are at the sharp end. For example, Woodside learning centre hosts a mini-market that prices goods at an affordable rate for people in the community, who can shop there rather than use the supermarkets, where many goods are priced out of their reach. The Printfield Community Project has a charity shop in which no items are priced and people are asked what they can afford to pay rather than priced out of purchasing items. Such approaches are helping my constituents in difficult times.

I cannot help but think that we would be better served if we looked carefully at cause and effect. The point was rightly made that—as Jackie Baillie highlighted in her speech—the genesis of the problems that have been identified as affecting people in Scotland is in policy decisions that are made south of the border in reserved areas. We can take at face value the points that Labour members make—I do not doubt for one second that members like Kezia Dugdale are passionate about the issues that they bring to the chamber—but what gets my goat is the notion that the Labour Party somehow has a monopoly on compassion and that SNP members are a bunch of uncaring, soulless individuals who focus only on the referendum.

I have made the point several times that I am not in this just to get powers for Scotland and say, “Job done.” I am in this to get powers for Scotland and to use them to shape a fairer and more equal society for the people who live here. That is what the referendum is about.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will Mark McDonald take an intervention?

**Mark McDonald:** No—I have only 45 seconds left.

Labour members say that we are “putting Scotland on pause” and that we are telling people to wait until after 2014. However, the Labour Party essentially says that people will have to put up with the Tories until 2015 and then cross their fingers and hope not only that it gets its act together as a Westminster party and gets into power, but that it does what it has said it would do.

I hope that we have learned our lesson from 1997, when the first thing the Labour Party did when it inherited power was to continue Tory

spending policies and Tory benefit cuts. I see Malcolm Chisholm in the chamber; he resigned as a minister because the Labour Government of 1997 continued the benefit cuts that the Conservatives envisaged. We should have learned our lesson from 1997; the Labour Party will tell the people of Scotland that all would be fixed by a Labour Government, but all that we have seen in evidence is the opposite.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you for sticking to your time. I apologise to Christian Allard, whom I could not call.

16:39

**Liam McArthur:** Predictably, it has been a passionate debate—often with more heat than light, although I draw particular attention to the speeches of Kezia Dugdale, Drew Smith and John Mason, which were passionate but constructive. John Mason politely inquired whether the reference in my amendment to the UK Government's commitment

“to spend 0.7% of national income on overseas aid”

was slightly out of place. Perhaps, in writing it, I had half an eye on Jackie Baillie's other debate this week, on challenging poverty.

As for today's speech from Jackie Baillie, I was left wondering what it is that she is looking for. She may be right that the Scottish Government is on pause ahead of next year's referendum, but what specific action she wanted from either Scottish or UK ministers was rather unclear. That is not to diminish the seriousness of the challenges facing those we represent: increased food, childcare and energy costs all play their part and no one can be anything other than appalled at the high levels of fuel poverty or the growing numbers of our citizens who are using food banks. Those issues demand an urgent response from both Scotland's Governments.

In my opening speech, I set out some of the important steps that are being taken at a UK level. They include a fundamental shift in the tax system that will result in 240,000 low-paid Scots being taken out of paying any income tax at all. That is a lasting, progressive and fair reform of our tax system. On pensions, too, I set out the effect of the so-called triple lock, which ensures that the state pension rises in line with inflation, with wages or by 2.5 per cent, whichever is highest, and which in 2012 delivered the highest ever cash increase in the state pension. That is a lasting, progressive and fair reform of our pensions.

On childcare and fuel costs, the coalition Government has also taken action to help hard-pressed families and individuals. Already in England, 20 per cent of two-year-olds from the

poorest backgrounds are receiving free nursery provision. That will rise to 40 per cent by next year. From 2015, the UK Government will meet 20 per cent of childcare costs for working families, building up to £1,200 per child under 12 per year—a scheme that is worth £750 million. Meanwhile, in the face of rising fuel costs, the UK Government has confirmed a further freeze in the duty for the next two years.

The warm homes discount, which is worth more than £1 billion, is also providing support to manage fuel bills, over and above the steps that are being taken forward through the green deal and the ECO.

Not surprisingly, most, if not all, members chose to focus much of their speeches on the impact of welfare reform. I can certainly understand that. Indeed, I probably should have addressed it in more detail in my own opening speech. From listening to the debate, however, one would assume that neither the SNP nor Labour accepts the need for welfare reform, which is simply not true. We know that the previous Labour Government was preparing very similar proposals to those that are now being taken forward by the coalition. Last December, Ed Balls promised

“a tougher approach to conditionality”

for benefit claimants. Meanwhile, Nicola Sturgeon has talked previously about the need to “simplify” welfare, although without sharing with us the details of what that entailed. That lack of detail may be convenient for the SNP ahead of next September, but it leaves the SNP having to explain what, if any, reduction in the £2.5 billion welfare bill it would expect to achieve.

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

**Liam McArthur:** I gave way in my opening speech—I will not give way this time.

Indeed, John Wilson, John Mason, Kenny Gibson and other SNP back benchers seemed intent this afternoon on hiking those costs still further. Given that the nationalists' own fiscal commission conceded today—albeit that it was hidden in the footnotes—that an oil fund by 2017-18 would require £3.4 billion to be taken out of public spending, it is even more unclear how they propose to pay for their promises on welfare. Unlike Patrick Harvie, all of them appear to want Scandinavian levels of spending without committing to Scandinavian levels of taxation.

I entirely accept that implementing reforms to our welfare system has been hugely difficult for many of those who have been directly affected. I know that from my own casework. Where changes need to be made to mitigate the impacts, they have been made and that absolutely must continue. However, denying the need for reform,

or insisting that it can somehow be achieved without controversy, is disingenuous. The notion that, as Nicola Sturgeon implies, we can simplify the system without creating winners and losers is simply ridiculous. The reality is that the current system too often provides the wrong incentives. For too many people, it acts as a real obstacle to work. As much as anything else, that is unfair to the claimants themselves.

Over a period when our economy experienced almost uninterrupted growth, the welfare budget ballooned by more than 40 per cent in real terms, so a strategy for job creation is essential, but it is not the whole answer. In the UK, we have 5 million people who are trapped on out-of-work benefits, one of the highest rates of workless households in Europe, and almost 2 million children who are living in homes where no one has a job. For Scotland, the picture is no less grim.

I agree with Kenny Gibson that tinkering around the edges will not cut it, but promising to maintain or even increase current levels of spend on welfare is neither honest nor affordable. Trapping people on benefits, rather than providing incentives and support into work, is also not desirable. It is right that we continue to press for appropriate changes and safeguards beyond those that have already been given, but claiming to be in favour of reform while holding the view that any benefit cuts or any tinkering of demands placed on recipients is automatically unfair is just not credible.

Let me conclude by making a more parochial point. Nowhere is the cost of living higher than in the islands, where fuel, food and travel—and childcare, too, where that is available—are all more expensive than on the mainland. Thanks to the Liberal Democrats, fuel duty on all our islands has been cut by 5p so, although fuel is still more expensive than on the mainland, the price differential is now less. By contrast, the SNP Government has chosen to increase costs to businesses in our island communities by cutting the air discount scheme and has excluded Orkney and Shetland from a cheap ferry fare scheme that is focused solely on the west coast routes.

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

**Liam McArthur:** There is a lack of fairness and a lack of any awareness of the additional costs that confront those who live and work on islands such as those that I represent.

16:45

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** This has been an interesting debate, in which we have managed, at least for part of the time, to turn away from the strange notion that everything

would be better in an independent Scotland. Today we have actually debated something that is important: we have discussed the cost of living and discussed it in terms of what has changed within the economy in recent years. However, we have made the old mistake of making the radical assumption that the world began on 6 May 2010. The Labour Party chose to characterise matters as if 6 May 2010 represented year zero and as if nothing happened before that date.

**Iain Gray:** Will the member give way?

**Alex Johnstone:** No. The member will get the opportunity to respond in a minute.

What happened before 6 May 2010 was that we had a Labour Government that demonstrated its level of fiscal responsibility. We had a Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer who decided to take millions of people at the bottom end into the tax system by introducing a 10p tax band, which was then doubled to 20p. We had a Labour Government that, far from being determined to freeze fuel prices, caused road fuel prices to rocket due to the fuel price escalator. During today's debate, Ken Macintosh complained about the price of fuel and how much it costs him to fill his car, but he failed to acknowledge that the current UK Government has taken actions that have made fuel 13p a litre cheaper at the pump than it would otherwise have been.

High road fuel prices affect not only those who have cars. We should remember that Scotland's road connections are longer and our communities are spread further apart, so the higher costs to business and the higher costs of transporting goods to supermarkets mean that prices are even higher in Scotland. The UK Government has delivered a substantial cut in what road fuel prices would otherwise have been.

Let us look at some other things that the Conservatives have done that contrast with what the previous Labour Government chose to do. All those millions of people on basic incomes who were dragged back into tax have been released from that bondage. The Conservatives, with their Liberal Democrat allies, have taken the opportunity to raise the tax threshold to ensure that, by 1 April next year, low-income families will have £700 a year more in income than they would otherwise have had.

**Patrick Harvie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alex Johnstone:** Let me take the opportunity to remind Patrick Harvie that that is paid for from nowhere other than the reduction in the threshold for higher-rate taxpayers. Higher-rate taxpayers are paying for the increase in the personal allowance.

**Patrick Harvie:** Will the member give way on that point?

**Alex Johnstone:** I am afraid that I have a limited amount of time, so I will continue.

What else have we done? Before I mention the other opportunities that we have taken, there is another point that I need to get in before I move on. The Labour Party has gone on at some length today about what I like to call the underoccupancy charge, although other members might have a different name for it. Can Labour members remember what they called that charge back in 2008, when the Labour Party invented it? One mystery surrounding the issue is that the underoccupancy charge was an invention of the previous Labour Government, which decided back in 2008 to enforce an underoccupancy charge on anyone claiming housing benefit for a private sector rent. I cannot understand how it is that Labour can make proposals for legislation that are designed to save all those people who were caught out by the policy of a Conservative Government but not save those people who were originally dragged into that tax loophole by the previous Labour Government.

There are other things that have been said in the debate that must be addressed. There is the idea that wages have fallen in Scotland. Of course we know that wages have fallen in Scotland in real terms, and we know that that has happened in both the public and private sectors. However, we must remember that action has been taken in the public sector and in some areas of the private sector to ensure that those on the lowest pay have been protected from that fall. We have taken the opportunity to ensure that, when wages were frozen at the height of the crisis, the low paid were made an exception to that.

During the course of the debate, we have heard repeatedly how Labour would do things differently. The truth is that we have plenty of examples of how Labour has chosen to do things in the past. The minute I hear Ed Miliband talk about the idea of fixing the price of fuel, I immediately have a race of word association. The last time Labour talked about price fixing was back in the 1970s. That led to wage fixing, then to an International Monetary Fund bailout and then to the winter of discontent.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** And it is now leading to closure—could you close, please?

**Alex Johnstone:** We have learned the lesson of the past. We will not repeat that failure. The Labour Party, however, has no memory of the past, and it is doomed to repeat that failure in the future.

16:51

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** It seems as though it is becoming bitter together, rather than better together.

There have been one or two good speeches in the debate. Kezia Dugdale, Mark McDonald and John Wilson made good speeches, but the key point was made by James Dornan. Whether we are talking about poverty and deprivation in recent years, over the past decade or over the past 20, 30 or 40 years, the fact of life is that, irrespective of which Government has been in power in London, the union has failed to deliver for the Scottish people, and far too many of our people, generation after generation, have been forced to live in poverty and deprivation. As James Dornan rightly said, achieving independence is a prerequisite to solving the problems of poverty and deprivation in Scotland.

**Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab):** James Dornan got some things wrong, too, about nursery places and so on. Glasgow City Council introduced them before he even got there.

**Alex Neil:** While we are on that point, one or two Labour speakers alleged that childcare in Scotland is the most expensive in the UK. That is not true. The Daycare Trust's report of March 2013 made it clear that Scotland has cheaper nursery places and childcare overall compared with south of the border. At least let us get our facts right about the achievements of the SNP Government over the past six years.

I find Labour's position lacking credibility, for three reasons. First, during Labour's 13 wasted years, it made practically no impact on the measures that we are talking about today. Members should consider the facts, as opposed to what Labour alleges. Let us consider Labour's record during those 13 wasted years. There has been a report out in the past two weeks showing that there are 1.5 million more children in the UK living in poverty now than there were 40 years ago—and Labour was in power for 18 of the past 40 years.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alex Neil:** Not at the moment.

Given that Labour was in power for nearly half that period, it has to share some of the responsibility for that.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Alex Neil:** Secondly, after the Labour Government had bankrupted Britain, unemployment was in the millions, and the issue



was not just the unemployed but the underemployed and hidden unemployment.

**Drew Smith:** Will the member give way?

**Alex Neil:** Thirdly, when we look at Labour's record, we see that, after 13 wasted years, Britain was the fourth most unequal country in the western world.

Of course I will take an intervention—choose between yourselves who it is.

**Jackie Baillie:** I want to talk about the SNP's wasted years. Will the cabinet secretary acknowledge that, in the first eight years of the Parliament, relative child poverty fell by a third and absolute child poverty fell by two thirds? Under his Government, the figures are flatlining and progress has stalled.

**Alex Neil:** The member always misses the point, which is that, when we get a yes vote next year, child poverty in Scotland will not be dropping, it will be eliminated. What an ambition for a Labour Party that tries to call itself socialist to want to reduce child poverty by a few percentage points. We should be talking about the elimination of child poverty in Scotland. The real poverty is the poverty of ambition of the Labour Party in Scotland. It is a disgrace.

I hate to agree with the Tories, but Alex Johnstone is correct to say that the Labour Party introduced the bedroom tax. Quite frankly, Labour members should be ashamed of themselves because, as with privatisation and many other policies, Labour paved the way for the most right-wing Government since Mrs Thatcher's.

**Drew Smith:** The point is that the proposal for a bedroom tax on social tenants was presented to the Labour Government and explicitly ruled out.

**Alex Neil:** Actually, the member should listen to Caroline Flint, Labour's housing spokesman at Westminster, because she specifically ruled it in and said that a Labour Government would keep the bedroom tax. Labour members are all over the place. One week they are for it, the next they are against it. It is like the old music hall song that goes:

"She wouldn't say yes, she wouldn't say no, she wouldn't say yes"—[*Laughter*.]

"She wouldn't say yes, she wouldn't say no, she wouldn't say stay, she wouldn't say go."

I am better at singing it than saying it, but the reality is that Labour is all over the place. My friend Malcolm Chisholm is all over the place—totally muddled. The logic of Malcolm Chisholm's position is to vote yes next year, because that is how we avoid the kind of policies that he has fought against all his days.

**Iain Gray:** On the theme of being all over the place, I understood that the SNP was against evictions on the basis of arrears arising from the bedroom tax. That was last week. This week, Jackie Baillie has lodged a proposal for a member's bill that would prevent such evictions. Will he sign it this week, or is he in fact all over the place?

**Alex Neil:** I gave way because I thought that the intervention was going to be original. I am fighting against Labour-controlled North Lanarkshire Council, which is evicting disabled people as we speak. We will not take the two-faced approach from the Labour Party on evictions as a result of the bedroom tax.

I started by saying that the Labour Party has no credibility. On the one hand, Labour members talk about tackling poverty but, on the other hand, they are planning the cuts commission. They cannot have both. Either they believe in the social wage, concessionary fares for the elderly and disabled, free personal care, free prescriptions and all the other things that this Government has introduced, or they believe in the cuts commission. It is a little ironic that the phraseology that George Osborne and Iain Duncan Smith used at the Tory conference this week was about a something for nothing culture, while Johann Lamont has talked about a something for nothing culture. The Labour Party speaks with a Tory voice in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Iain Gray to wind up the debate. Mr Gray, you have until 5.09.

17:00

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** Two weeks ago, when we debated the Scottish economy, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth painted a rosy picture of recovery, with GDP and employment up over the year, and surveys showing that purchasing managers, the Bank of Scotland and small businesses are more confident than they were.

Today's debate is deliberately designed to look beyond those carefully selected headlines of recovery to the hard, sometimes even harsh, world of reality, and generally that is what members on all sides of the chamber have done. The exceptions, perhaps, were the final contributions from Alex Johnstone and Alex Neil, which had a passing relationship with reality and, indeed, with the truth.

Most Scots would not recognise the recovery that Mr Swinney was at such pains to describe a couple of weeks ago any more than they would recognise the recovery described by George Osborne this week. Jackie Baillie made clear our view that responsibility for the structural weakness

in the recovery lies with George Osborne and the coalition Government, because a recovery that is built on jobs that are increasingly part time or temporary, and on zero-hour contracts without job security or even a guarantee of work, feels like no recovery at all. A recovery that is built on declining wages that no longer stretch to pay the gas and electricity bills or cover childcare costs, with welfare changes that are already leaving 80,000 Scottish households struggling to pay rent that has been augmented by the bedroom tax, is a recovery for the rich, while most face a struggle to survive.

It is not getting better. In fact, it is getting worse, as many speakers on all sides of the chamber have demonstrated, using sources as diverse as the IFS and Asda's mumdex to show that the real value of wages is falling. The proportion of Scottish families earning below the living wage is rising. Zero-hour contracts have soared in Britain; there are 1 million in Britain, so there must be perhaps 100,000 in Scotland. Energy Action Scotland tells us that 900,000 Scottish households live in fuel poverty. Two hundred and twenty thousand Scottish children live in absolute poverty—and the figure is not improving. Kezia Dugdale and Jackie Baillie are right to point out that, when we had a Labour Government in Westminster and a Labour-led Government here, the child poverty figure plummeted, but that progress has stopped. Twice as many Scots are now resorting to food banks, many more are resorting to payday loans, and one in three council tenants affected by the bedroom tax is already in arrears. That is not recovery; it is a reversal of living standards, and it demands urgent action now.

In response, the SNP amendment and most SNP speakers have gloriously missed the point. The fact is that if someone is struggling in a minimum wage job on a zero-hours contract in a property deemed too big for them, they do not pay council tax. The chances are that their children will not go to university, given the Government's woeful record on widening access. They cannot afford a car to cross the Forth bridge free, and if they can still find a bus service running, the fare that they pay will have been pushed up by the cut in concessionary travel recompense to the bus companies, so although it will be free when they are 60, right now they cannot afford it. The truth is that people in those circumstances worry about getting through to the end of the week—not about getting to 65, when they will get free personal care.

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

**Iain Gray:** I am sorry; my time has been cut.

As for extended childcare, Kezia Dugdale has made it clear that we have waited seven years on

that promise and it still falls short of what is proposed everywhere else in the country.

Whatever the merit or otherwise of those policies—and we introduced several of them and supported others—they do not add up to a strategy to raise living standards or eradicate poverty; quite the reverse.

Annabelle Ewing said that her Government was “straining every sinew” to help hard-pressed families. Why, then, does it refuse to find the full £50 million this year and next year to banish the effects of the bedroom tax from Scotland?

**Annabelle Ewing:** Will Iain Gray give way?

**Iain Gray:** No, I am sorry.

John Wilson made an eloquent case that the national minimum wage is not enough. Why, then, does the Government that he supports refuse to use its own procurement contracts to demand that companies pay the living wage?

Whatever else it might be guilty of, last week, Scotland's biggest company, SSE, announced that it will become a living-wage employer. That will apply not only to direct employees but to the whole supply chain of subcontractors. If it can do that, why can the Scottish Government not follow its example?

Why does the Scottish Government refuse to use its contracts to outlaw exploitative zero-hours jobs? We agree that a contract such as the one for the Borders railway should boost jobs and the economy, but it should not give succour to firms that leave workers sitting at home on zero-hours contracts. How can it be that universities—recipients of all that taxpayer funding for tuition fees—are the worst offenders when it comes to zero-hours contracts and the Government just shrugs its shoulders?

Those are all things that the Government could do but chooses not to because the SNP's core argument is that if people want it to help and support them, they must first vote for separation.

What does the SNP promise to do if it gets independence? Will it match Labour's energy price freeze commitment and introduce a regulator to control energy prices in future? No. I tell members what it will do instead: it will give those energy companies a huge corporation tax windfall paid for by service cuts and taxes for the people who are paying through the nose for those companies' bills.

Will the SNP match Labour's promise to end exploitative zero-hours contracts? No. An independent Scotland will be a zero-hours haven as well as a tax haven.

Will the SNP match Labour's commitment on nurseries for three and four-year-olds and

wraparound childcare for all primary pupils? It does not even need a yes vote for that. It could do it right now. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Order.

**Iain Gray:** I know that most members were not here when Angela Constance spoke, but she said—I think that she was sincere—that she was

“determined”

to tackle

“the root causes of poverty.”

The best way to find out what really matters to a Government is to follow the money, so let us look at poverty.

Back in 2007, the SNP had £1.5 billion-worth of programmes that were easily identifiable and clearly designed to address poverty, such as the community regeneration fund, the fairer Scotland fund and the supporting people fund. Now, six years on, how is that going? What do we have in this year’s budget? The community regeneration fund was £132 million; now, it is nothing. The antisocial behaviour fund was £37 million; now, it is nothing. The fairer Scotland fund—how many SNP members said that they wanted a fairer Scotland?—was £163 million in 2007. How much is it now? It is nothing—zero, zilch.

**The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Derek Mackay):** Will Iain Gray give way?

**Iain Gray:** I know what Mr Mackay will say. He will say—*[Interruption.]* He was not here.

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Iain Gray:** He will say that it has all been rolled into the local authorities’ money. Here is the truth: those poverty programmes are how the Government paid for the council tax freeze and getting rid of the tolls on the Forth bridge.

Kenny Gibson said that we had to understand that the SNP had 10 per cent less resource to fight poverty. No—I say to him that it has 75 per cent less resource, which the Government he supports cut out of poverty programmes in the past six years.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Gray, you need to wind up.

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

**Iain Gray:** No. I am finishing up. I am over time.

**The Presiding Officer:** The member is in his last few seconds. *[Interruption.]* Order.

**Iain Gray:** Has that happened because poverty has gone? No. Is it because Scotland is already a paragon of fairness? No. Those programmes have

gone because that is the cost of living in a country with a Government that puts party first and the people of Scotland second. That is the price of a Scotland on pause.

## Point of Order

17:10

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. In response to a question by Annabelle Ewing, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning said correctly that he could not comment on the closure of schools in Fife, as he may be asked to rule on them should they be called in at some later point. He said:

"It is inappropriate to comment further at this stage on Fife Council's plans in case that is seen to prejudice any decisions that must be taken."

Against that backdrop, perhaps the cabinet secretary could explain a picture that I have here that was tweeted by the chief executive of the Scottish National Party, Peter Murrell, which has the cabinet secretary proudly posing with SNP literature entitled "Save Our Schools". *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Order.

**Kezia Dugdale:** Does the Presiding Officer believe that the cabinet secretary has compromised his position with his conduct in the Dunfermline by-election?

**The Presiding Officer:** Ms Dugdale, that was a debating point.

## Business Motions

17:11

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-07875, 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 8 October 2013

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate:  
Commission for Developing Scotland's  
Young Workforce: Interim Report

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Anti-social  
Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill – UK  
Legislation

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 9 October 2013

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Portfolio Questions  
Finance, Employment and Sustainable  
Growth

*followed by* Health and Sport Committee Debate:  
Access to New Medicines

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 10 October 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 Debate: Carbon  
Capture and Storage

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 29 October 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 30 October 2013

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
 Justice and the Law Officers;  
 Rural Affairs and the Environment  
*followed by* Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 31 October 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* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-07876, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out an extension to the stage 1 timetable for the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be extended to 15 November 2013.—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motions.

I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S4M-07877, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Rosyth International Container Terminal (Harbour Revision) Order 2013 [draft] be approved.—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Alex Johnstone to speak against the motion.

17:12

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** Last Wednesday morning, the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee took evidence and subsequently voted on the Rosyth International Container Terminal (Harbour Revision) Order 2013.

At that meeting, we had the opportunity to question the Minister for Transport and Veterans and officials. A number of questions were asked, including on issues relating to the multimodal provision for access to such a terminal and whether ultimately only roads would be used for that purpose. There were also questions about the capacity and whether projections that were made on the decisions surrounding the national planning framework 2 paper some years before were accurate and appropriate.

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** The Government initially included mitigation measures in article 17(6), but I am puzzled and disconcerted that they have been removed with only a promise from the minister. However good he is, he could be replaced tomorrow and those assurances could be dispensed with. I hope that the member agrees that those mitigation measures should be included in the order.

My other concern is that the process has been salami sliced with the marine licensing process considering major parts of the environmental impact, including dredging of the Forth in a special protection area. Does the member consider those as important factors and that the order should therefore be rejected?

**Alex Johnstone:** I consider those factors to be important, and they should have been appropriately taken into account. It has to be said that the mitigation of the environmental impacts as well as other noise and other concerns—

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alex Johnstone:** Yes.

**The Presiding Officer:** I remind the member that he has only three minutes.

**Alison Johnstone:** The member raised the issue of roads being the only way to access the proposed facility. RSPB Scotland said that, if the order is approved by the affirmative procedure, that approval could be in breach of European Union law. RSPB Scotland believes that the order should not be made until an environmental impact assessment has been completed and the results taken into account. Does the member share that view?

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Johnstone, you have under a minute.

**Alex Johnstone:** I certainly acknowledge the member's concern.

Members around the chamber have expressed significant concerns about the clarity of the answers given on some of the issues. Although only a minority of us will be prepared to vote against the motion, I believe that the concerns are well founded. At the committee meeting last Wednesday, the result of the vote was four to three. The vote will not be so close on this occasion, but I think that we have a duty to ensure that we take the appropriate action at this time.

**The Presiding Officer:** I call on Keith Brown to respond.

17:15

**The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown):** I thank you, Presiding Officer, for the chance to speak on the order, which I believe offers benefits for Scotland and the local area by providing for the development of modern port facilities, providing jobs both in construction—an estimated 500 jobs—and in operation, and contributing to our economy.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I seek assurances from the minister today that, if the order is passed, the range of community and environmental concerns, as well as the concern that the EIA has not yet been completed, will be monitored and acted on if necessary.

**Keith Brown:** There are two further processes that should give the assurances that the member seeks. The first is the construction environmental management plan—the CEMP—and the second involves the marine licence being approved, which is still to be done. No work can take place either on the river or onshore until the marine licence is approved.

The project was included in the second national planning framework—NPF2—and I remain of the view that the proposal meets the criteria outlined

at that time. The site has rail infrastructure, which can be brought into use if the demand is forthcoming. I also recognise that there has been on-going local objection to the proposal. However, that objection and many others were considered at a lengthy public local inquiry.

In proposing to make the order, I have taken into account the majority of the recommendations from the inquiry and some additional changes following the further period of consultation. The changes include mitigation measures and safeguards, including a requirement that the works cannot commence until the CEMP, which I have mentioned, is refined and approved by the Scottish ministers following further consultation with local communities and environmental bodies. I can assure the Parliament that that will not be deleted from the draft considered by the reporters.

I acknowledge that further assessment of the impacts of the proposed dredging is required. I consider that, in line with the reporters' recommendations and in keeping with habitats regulations, that can best be carried out using the expertise of Marine Scotland in considering an application for a marine licence, without which the project cannot proceed, as I have said.

I believe that the project will strengthen our commitment to a diverse and market-led ports industry and provide our manufacturers and importers with choice in moving their goods to markets. I commend the order to members.

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

The next item of business is consideration of a further Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S4M-07878, on stage 2 of the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees, under Rule 9.7.4, to consider the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 in the following order: sections 26 and 27 (by the Health and Sport Committee) and sections 1 to 25 and sections 28 to 31 (by the Justice Committee).—[Joe Fitzpatrick.]

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

## Decision Time

17:18

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-07872.3, in the name of Alex Neil, which seeks to amend motion S4M-07872, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on the cost of living, 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)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (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)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 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)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (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)

### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 65, Against 49, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-07872.4, in the name of Gavin Brown, which seeks to amend motion S4M-07872, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on the cost of living, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central 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)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 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)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (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)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 19, Against 95, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-07872.1, in the name of Liam McArthur, which seeks to amend motion S4M-07872, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on the cost of living, be agreed to. Are we agreed?



**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central 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)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 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)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)

Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (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)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 19, Against 95, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-07872, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on the cost of living, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (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)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 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)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (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)

#### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)

Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 65, Against 49, Abstentions 0.

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

That the Parliament notes the decline in real wages for people in Scotland at a time when living costs are rising; understands that the cost of essentials such as food, childcare and energy has risen and the report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2013*, shows that, over the last five years, the cost of essential goods and services has increased by nearly 25%; is concerned at the increases in the number of people in fuel poverty and using food banks; notes that, in 2011-12, there were 950,000 people living in absolute poverty in Scotland, 220,000 of whom were children, welcomes the action taken by the Scottish Government to support household incomes including the council tax freeze, the maintenance of free bus travel for older people, the extension of free nursery provision, the introduction of free personal care for older people, free university tuition and abolition of bridge tolls, and believes that, with independence, including control of taxation and welfare, Scotland can be a beacon of progressive action to tackle poverty and maintain household incomes.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-07877, in the name of Joe

FitzPatrick, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)

McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 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)

**Against**

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McGregor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central 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)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 88, Against 24, Abstentions 0.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Rosyth International Container Terminal (Harbour Revision) Order 2013 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-07878, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees, under Rule 9.7.4, to consider the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill at stage

2 in the following order: sections 26 and 27 (by the Health and Sport Committee) and sections 1 to 25 and sections 28 to 31 (by the Justice Committee)

## Teenage Cancer Trust

### **The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):**

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-07630, in the name of Aileen McLeod, on supporting Teenage Cancer Trust's education programme. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament recognises the importance of early diagnosis of cancer in Scotland's young people; acknowledges what it sees as the key role of Teenage Cancer Trust's education programme and its innovative and unique partnership with the Detect Cancer Early Programme in educating young people in South Scotland and across the country about cancer; notes that Teenage Cancer Action Week takes place across the UK from 14 to 20 October 2013; understands that the key aim of the week is to raise awareness of the five most common signs of cancer in 13 to 24-year-olds and for this knowledge to be shared among family and friends, and commends Teenage Cancer Trust on its efforts to raise awareness of cancer among young people, educating them on the importance of early diagnosis and improving the wellbeing of young people who are diagnosed with the condition.

17:25

**Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** I am delighted to lead this debate in support of the Teenage Cancer Trust education programme. I thank the members who signed the motion and made the debate possible, and I thank those who will speak in such an important debate.

I pay tribute to Dawn Crosby, Caroline Brocklehurst, Iona MacMillan and Rosanna Innes, from the Teenage Cancer Trust, who are in the public gallery. Their dedication and commitment to helping to improve the lives of teenagers and young people in Scotland who have cancer deserve our recognition and thanks. Their enthusiasm for what they do makes such a difference to the lives of the young people whom they support.

I first heard about the Teenage Cancer Trust in 2000, when Roger Daltrey, of The Who, organised the first fundraising concert for the trust at the Royal Albert hall. I thought then that at last there was an organisation that was dedicated to supporting young people with cancer and helping them to deal with what is an extremely traumatic and life-changing event.

Since its inception in 1990, when its first teenage cancer unit opened at the Middlesex hospital in London, the trust has gone on to fund, develop and open 25 units across the United Kingdom. It currently has four operational units in Scotland, which provide 18 beds across four hospitals in Edinburgh and Glasgow. It also funds youth support co-ordinators, who make a huge

difference to young cancer patients' quality of life, by helping them to share their experiences.

In April I visited the Teenage Cancer Trust unit at the Beatson west of Scotland cancer centre, at Gartnavel hospital. It was an opportunity for me to learn about the services that are available to young people with cancer and to meet families and hear about their experiences at first hand, as well as meeting the dedicated nursing and clinical staff whose care and support is, without doubt, second to none.

The visit was all the more poignant for me because I am a teenage cancer survivor, and I know what it is like to be that young person, who just wants to be like any normal teenager. I know how lonely I felt when I was not able to talk to anyone who was the same age as I was and who was going through the same treatment. I was so impressed by the unit, and I am so glad that young people who are fighting cancer have such a place to support them. What is so important about the unit is that it brings our young people together, where they can be treated by specialists in teenage cancer, and that it enables the young people to be themselves first and cancer patients second.

For young people, the trauma of diagnosis and harsh chemotherapy—with all that that means for hair loss and fertility—happens at the worst possible time, just when they are trying to find out who they are. To be able to go through their treatment with young people their own age and not on their own, and to be able—when they feel up to it—to hang out together, playing pool, listening to music, watching DVDs and playing computer games, can make such a difference to the whole experience.

It was at the unit that I met Amy Callaghan, who is in the gallery, and Amy Quinn, who unfortunately cannot be here. We have all read Amy Quinn's letter about her personal journey with cancer. I thank Amy Callaghan, Mairead MacLeod, Emma Scullion, Angela Colquhoun and Luke Coulter for meeting me that afternoon, and I thank Amy Quinn in particular for sharing her experiences with us, which I know took a lot of courage.

I think that all members will agree that Amy Quinn's story has made more impact than any report or policy statement could do. It was very much with her wishes in mind that I sought this debate, because we should do everything possible to ensure that other young people do not have to go through the lengthy journey of diagnosis that she experienced.

Teenagers and young adults with cancer are a particularly vulnerable group, with unique physical and emotional needs. As the trust said in its

helpful briefing, cancer is the most common cause of non-accidental death in young people, and five-year survival rates remain lower in teenagers than in children.

Seven young people aged 13 to 24 are diagnosed with cancer every day in the United Kingdom, which is around 2,500 each year. In Scotland, an average of 203 teenagers and young adults are diagnosed with cancer each year while, across all age groups, two in five people in Scotland will be diagnosed with some form of cancer during their lifetime.

According to the trust, the signs of cancer in young people are often dismissed or misdiagnosed because they are similar to less harmful problems. Research that was carried out by the trust shows that 40 per cent of Scottish young people with cancer had to visit their general practitioner four times or more before their symptoms were taken seriously or they were referred to a specialist. Some of the difficulties can arise because young people do not always know when something is seriously wrong, take a while before they decide to seek medical advice or simply find it hard to talk to their GP and explain what is wrong.

All that contrasts worryingly with the universally acknowledged fact that swift early diagnosis and referral for specialist treatment is vital and has a positive effect on patient experience, potentially reducing the intensity and duration of the treatment; the scale of late effects; quality of life; and, in some cancers, survival itself. Therefore, we need to educate young people and health professionals about the ways in which cancer can present in teenagers in order to improve the speed and quality of diagnosis. Although cancer in that age group is rare, given the comparatively poor survival rates it is vital that we all know the five common signs so that further medical advice can be sought if there are ever concerns. Those signs include pain of all kinds, including headaches, stomach ache and pains in the legs or arms; unexplained lumps, bumps or swellings; extreme tiredness; significant weight loss; and changes in a mole.

To empower our young people to take control of their health, the trust plans to raise awareness of those five most common signs of cancer in our young people through its teenage cancer action week between 14 and 20 October. That will be actively promoted through schools, with a free education pack, as well as through social media, local GP surgeries and youth clubs. Members of the Scottish Parliament can help by sharing the information at our local community centres and surgeries.

Another route is through the trust's pioneering education programme, which is raising awareness

and providing advice about the signs of teenage cancer, cancer treatments and prevention, and healthy living. To date, the trust has worked with 95 schools in Scotland, reaching more than 11,000 students, and we know that its innovative approach works because research by the University of Stirling on the programme showed an increase in the number of cancer warning signs that teenagers recognised.

To help to ensure that education about and awareness of cancer continue to play a central role in early detection and diagnosis, the trust has been working in partnership with the Scottish Government's detect cancer early programme. Since its launch in June by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Alex Neil, the programme has succeeded in recruiting 20 schools, double the number of secondary schools in Glasgow that were initially targeted. All the schools will be monitored to evaluate the impact of the educational programme on both pupils and their wider families. In total, more than 2,400 students and 295 parents/carers will be part of the programme, making the study the biggest health intervention scheme of its kind in Scotland. It will, I hope, mean that the next generation is not afraid to talk about cancer. In that regard, our young people have a key role to play in Scotland's fight against cancer.

The Teenage Cancer Trust is working hard to improve the quality of life and chances of survival of teenagers and young people throughout Scotland, not least through its excellent education and awareness-raising programme. On 6 November, I will host a parliamentary reception with the trust at which it will launch a new report highlighting the scale of delayed diagnosis among young people with cancer in Scotland. Much work is being done, but more work still needs to be done to support our young people in their fight against cancer, ensuring that they have a clear care pathway that takes them forward to a life without cancer. I look forward to continuing to support the Teenage Cancer Trust in all that it does for Scotland's young people with cancer.

17:34

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** I congratulate Aileen McLeod on lodging her motion and pay tribute to all the work that she has done, over the years, in this important area. I also congratulate the Teenage Cancer Trust for all the superb work that it has done. The education programme is the main topic of the debate but, as Aileen McLeod reminded us, the trust has also been involved in supporting and funding specialist units in national health service hospitals such as the Beatson, providing

dedicated staff. We should remember that very important part of its work.

This evening we are concentrating on the trust's work to educate young people and health professionals about cancer, in order to help improve the speed and quality of diagnosis. Early diagnosis is crucial for all cancers and it is a matter of particular concern that for teenagers and indeed children there is often a particular problem of late diagnosis. In fact, this is a problem in relation to children that several people have drawn to my attention in the past few weeks.

The programme that is provided by the Teenage Cancer Trust is extremely important. The trust offers a unique service that no other charity provides, in that it provides free outreach services to schools, clubs and youth associations. Between 2011 and 2012, for example, it visited as many as 95 schools, passing information to 11,000 young people.

In the teenage cancer action week, which will come up very shortly, the trust will focus on the five most common signs of cancer. The trust clearly has a very important role in communicating in the presence of teenagers, but it also has a wide range of accessible advice on its website. As the teenage cancer action week approaches, the trust has used the opportunity to invite young people on to its forum to share their stories and the challenges that they have faced.

The example of Amy Quinn has already been referred to and we are all very grateful to her for sending her letter to us. I do not have time to read out very much of her letter, but I noticed what she wrote towards the end of it:

"I told my doctor and she dismissed me as just being a grumpy teenager. Eventually she said she thought it might be a cyst"

that is an ovarian cyst

"but I disagreed. I told her I didn't think a cyst would make me feel so weird all the time, but she wouldn't listen."

As the Teenage Cancer Trust points out, such dismissal of teenagers with cancer is not uncommon. In the case of Amy, after she persistently argued that she would require further help, she eventually succeeded in having the treatment that she needed. If it had not been for the advice given to her through the outreach scheme, this young woman might not have been so resolute in continuing to seek help. That is one example of the vital work that is done by the Teenage Cancer Trust.

We should also refer to wider services for teenage cancer patients in general. Before this debate, I read the cancer plan for children and young people, which is very commendable. In particular, it focuses on a managed service

network—a particularly Scottish feature of the health service over the past decade or so—for teenage cancer. That is a very positive development, although it is a bit worrying that some of the key aims are not being met, such as equity of access to the best possible care and equity of access to clinical trials.

It is clear that there is room for improvement, but we should commend the Government on the detect cancer early programme and welcome the partnership between the Teenage Cancer Trust and that programme. There is much to celebrate. Today, in particular, we celebrate the work of the Teenage Cancer Trust. I am sure that we would all like to unite in thanking it for all that it has done and will do. Finally, we should once again pay tribute to Aileen McLeod.

17:38

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP):** I congratulate my friend and colleague Aileen McLeod on bringing this debate to the chamber. Aileen's personal testimony serves to remind us that many members have experience of issues beyond our comprehension. It took a great deal of courage for Aileen to relate her personal experiences in Parliament and I thank her very much for doing that. I could not begin to imagine the circumstances undergone by somebody who was diagnosed with cancer at such an early age. It is a great credit to her that she is using the opportunity that she has as a member of the Parliament to raise awareness and to bring this debate to the chamber.

I also thank the Teenage Cancer Trust for its briefing in advance of this debate and I thank Amy Quinn for her letter. It cannot have been easy for her to relive the experience and write it out for members of this Parliament to read. I read it and I was struck by its content.

Although detecting cancer as early as possible is obviously a healthcare issue, I have identified an attitudinal issue in the briefing and in Amy's letter. We need to look at how seriously we take young people when they present with health problems and ensure that they are not dismissed as readily as Amy's fears about her health were. All too often in society, we do not listen enough to young people when they talk about their problems. We need to do that.

When it comes to the wider attitudinal agenda, I absolutely agree that we need to raise awareness of the issue. I note from the briefing that

"Cancer is the most common cause of non-accidental death in young people, and five-year survival rates remain lower in teenagers than in children. While cancer in this age group is rare, it's vital for young people to know the common signs so they can seek medical advice if they are worried."

It is not just a case of educating young people by talking to them; it is also about getting young people to be more open to talking about the issue among themselves. It strikes me that there is a parallel with the conversations that we have had about mental health, in that it is not a comfortable subject for people to talk about; it is not the sort of thing that they talk about at the dinner table or among their peers and friends. If we make people comfortable enough to open up about it, to discuss it and to help one another through difficulties by spotting the signs, we can save lives.

The work that the trust is doing, which I read about in its briefing, is fantastic. We should look at how we can replicate that work across Scotland. I am aware from conversations that my office had with the trust that it has not yet expanded its services into the Aberdeen area. I look forward to having a discussion with the trust about whether it has plans to do so in future, and about what MSPs who represent communities where it does not yet have a reach can do to take its message to health boards and health professionals. I would be happy to have such a discussion, perhaps at the reception, if I am able to attend it.

I commend Aileen McLeod for bringing the issue to the chamber. If, as a society, we can become more open in discussing issues to do with cancer—particularly as it affects young people—I think that that will go some way to resolving some of the issues that the trust has identified.

17:42

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** Over the past 10 years, I have participated in many members' business debates on health-related topics that have highlighted excellent work in Scotland that is not widely known, but which should be. The Teenage Cancer Trust's education programme falls into that category, and I would like to thank Aileen McLeod for bringing it to our attention this evening.

We are all familiar with the high incidence of cancer in the general population, but I admit that I was surprised to learn that, across the UK, as many as seven people between the ages of 13 and 24 are diagnosed with cancer every day, which equates to an average of 203 teenagers and young adults being diagnosed in Scotland every year. Yet, when I stop to think about it, I know or have known several people in their teens and early 20s who have developed leukaemia, sarcoma, melanoma, liver cancer or some other malignancy.

However, cancer is not a condition that we generally associate with young people, so as well as it being particularly frightening for someone in their teens to be faced with such a diagnosis, the

symptoms are not always recognised for what they are, even by the medical profession, as we have heard. The result is that diagnosis is often delayed, which, of course, is not good for the patient, physically, psychologically or emotionally.

The work of the Teenage Cancer Trust in educating young people about the symptoms and signs that might indicate the presence of cancer is extremely important, as it gives them the knowledge that will help to empower them to take responsibility for their health, and to dispel some of the fears and misconceptions that they might have around cancer.

The signs of cancer in young people can easily be missed, because they often resemble those of other, less harmful conditions, but it is alarming that the trust's research has found that as many as 40 per cent of young Scots with cancer see their GP four times or more before their symptoms are taken seriously or they are referred to a specialist. Amy Quinn's experience, which was so clearly expressed to us ahead of the debate, illustrates that graphically. Young people need to be educated about the signs of cancer, and they certainly should not have to worry about talking to their GP.

The Teenage Cancer Trust's education programme gives free information, education and advice about cancer and its prevention, and about healthy living, to around 130,000 students and teachers across the UK every year and, last year, it visited 95 schools in Scotland, through which it reached more than 11,000 students. As a result, increasing numbers of young people are looking to take control of their own health and are feeling able to speak up if they are worried about some physical change and to discuss cancer openly with others such as family and friends.

In preparing for the debate, I came across some very appreciative words about the education programme from pupils and teachers who had found it very informative and felt that it was presented in an interesting and thought-provoking way and pitched at the right level of giving information without being overly dramatic. In one very moving testimonial, a young boy who had attended an education event felt able to tell his mum about a testicular lump that had been worrying him for two years. Fortunately, the lump turned out not to be cancerous, but the knowledge that he gained gave him the courage to discuss his problem, which, of course, could have been much more serious.

The recently launched partnership between the Teenage Cancer Trust and the Scottish Government's detect cancer early initiative is exciting and I hope that, if it proves to be successful in Glasgow schools over the next year or so, it will be rolled out to other parts of Scotland

including, as Mark McDonald has suggested, my area, Aberdeen.

We need to publicise the Teenage Cancer Trust's work, not least the specialist teenage units that it has provided in NHS hospitals right across the UK, including the Beatson centre in Glasgow. Of course, the debate is specifically about the trust's education programme, which I am very happy to endorse, and I once again commend Aileen McLeod for bringing the issue to our notice this evening and for sponsoring the trust's parliamentary event on 6 November, which I look forward to attending.

17:46

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** I, too, congratulate Aileen McLeod on securing the debate, and acknowledge the good work that she has done on the matter outwith Parliament. As Mark McDonald made clear, Parliament is all the better for people bringing their personal experiences to it.

The debate is also timely, coming as it does just before teenage cancer action week, and it provides members with the opportunity to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution that the Teenage Cancer Trust has made for more than two decades in the UK.

Teenagers tend to think that they are invincible and impervious to disease—especially to serious illnesses such as cancer. Indeed, the perception is that cancer is reserved for those in later life. There is also an element of unintentional ignorance. A Teenage Cancer Trust survey revealed that more than half of 13 to 24-year-olds believe that we are all born with the cancer gene and that just over a fifth believe that the colour of one's skin determines whether one gets cancer or not. The natural naivety of youth is to be expected, and teenagers can be forgiven for not immediately associating fatigue, swelling and pain with cancer. That is why the trust's free education programme is so vital and must be commended.

That the trust's advocates and educators reached more than 11,000 students in Scotland during the 2011-12 academic year is an achievement to be proud of but, given the personal testimonies of teenage cancer sufferers and the trust's statistics, it seems that educating teenagers on cancer's warning signs is only part of the battle.

Too many of our young people are having to make multiple presentations to healthcare professionals before a diagnosis is finally made. It should worry all of us that two thirds of the young cancer sufferers who were surveyed believe that their diagnoses could have been made quicker, and that 40 per cent of young Scots with cancer



said that they had to visit their GP at least four times before they were referred to a specialist. That statistic is very troubling—particularly when one considers that the subsequent target for treating those youths would be to do so within 62 days. That is a considerable length of time for people who have had symptoms for a while.

Early diagnosis and treatment for cancer patients of all ages are vital, and although improvements have been made there are still areas of Scotland where not enough patients are being treated within 62 days of a referral for suspected cancer. For instance, the target is 95 per cent, but for NHS Grampian the figure is 88.9 per cent and for NHS Borders 91.8 per cent. The situation is worse for specific cancers, with the national average for cervical and urological cancer standing at 88.6 and 88.2 per cent. If those are the averages, some boards will—naturally—be performing worse than that, and perhaps significantly so.

Education programmes are important, but so is ensuring that the infrastructure and personnel are in place to deal with patients when they receive the dreadful news. I commend the people at the Teenage Cancer Trust, who do important work, and those in the NHS who continue to treat and look after cancer sufferers. I congratulate Aileen McLeod again on bringing the subject to the chamber.

17:50

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** I join colleagues in thanking Aileen McLeod for lodging the motion and I join her in thanking the Teenage Cancer Trust and all its supporters for the fantastic work that they do to support young people across Scotland. Cancer is a terrible disease at any age, but it can be particularly devastating when it affects the young.

Prevention needs to remain a priority, but we also know that the earlier we diagnose cancer, the more likely intervention is to succeed. I have no doubt that the trust's education programme could make a substantive difference in raising awareness among 13 to 24-year-olds and in improving detection.

It is essential to highlight this evening and during October's teenage cancer action week the need to support our young people who are diagnosed with cancer during their school and college years. According to research by CLIC Sargent, two thirds of 16 to 18-year-olds with cancer said that they fell behind in their studies or performed worse than expected. Three out of 10 said that they had to leave education altogether. When CLIC Sargent asked teachers for their views, only 15 per cent of secondary teachers said

that they had enough information or guidance to support a pupil with cancer.

Children and young people face many challenges and obstacles in continuing their studies while coping with or recovering from cancer, such as fatigue, problems with concentration and emotional difficulties. Even changes such as weight gain that is caused by medication can add to feelings of isolation and self-consciousness, to which Aileen McLeod eloquently and tellingly referred.

I thank the Minister for Youth Employment for her answers to a series of written questions that I have submitted on the issue, but there is more that she and her colleague Mr Matheson, the Minister for Public Health, could do. That includes a formal needs assessment when young people return to school, one-to-one tuition to fill any gaps in learning and good practice that ranges from reorganising timetables to a personal expression of interest from the headteacher.

One of the most interesting and important developments in England and Wales has been the introduction earlier this year of new guidance for local authorities that sets out their legal responsibility to ensure that children and young people with medical needs receive a good education. I understand that that might have been accompanied by a new system of funding for hospital education. I am sure that the minister is aware of how varied the hospital education picture is in Scotland. I would welcome his comments on whether the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill is the right vehicle to address that troubling issue.

I commend the work of the Teenage Cancer Trust and the motion from Aileen McLeod.

17:53

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Like others, I congratulate Aileen McLeod on securing time for the debate and bringing to the Parliament's attention the important work that the Teenage Cancer Trust undertakes daily. I thank the trust for the tremendous amount of work that it does over the year and particularly for its close working with our detect cancer early team, to which some members have referred.

I recognise that the fear of being diagnosed with cancer is still one of the biggest imaginable, particularly for children and young people. A diagnosis of cancer often proves traumatic not only for the affected individual but for their family.

Thankfully, the number of children and young people in Scotland who are diagnosed with cancer every year is relatively small. However, when they are diagnosed, that can have a significant impact

on their life, particularly as they might be at a stage when they are finding themselves and at a key point in their education—that can have a lasting impact. It is therefore important that all our services are able to work collectively in order not only to treat an individual as effectively as they can clinically, but to look at the holistic picture around how they can provide them with support and assistance in education and in other areas.

It may be helpful if I set out for members how we provide children and young people's cancer services in Scotland. They are largely taken forward through our managed service network, which Malcolm Chisholm referred to.

The managed service network was established in 2011 and it is there to help to ensure that we have sustainable services across Scotland for young people up to the age of 15. I note Malcolm Chisholm's concerns about the fact that some of the areas of progress that were set out in the action plan have not been achieved as yet. However, the action plan does run up until 2015 and there is an annual report that sets out the progress that has been made and also identifies what future action has to be taken in order to ensure that we maintain progress in this area. I hope that Malcolm Chisholm will be reassured that there is certainly more that we can do in this area and the managed service network is determined to do so.

It is also worth noting that the managed service network works closely with the professionals who work in this field and with third sector colleagues, and has had very helpful contributions from organisations such as the Teenage Cancer Trust. Most important, it also has input from children and young people and their families.

I recognise that the members of the managed service network have taken forward an outstanding level of work to date and they are starting to make a change in how services are delivered. I have no doubt that they will wish to continue with that work between now and 2015.

We have heard about the numbers of young people who can be diagnosed with cancer—about 170 teenagers and young adults aged between 15 and 24 are diagnosed with cancer each year in Scotland. Very often, the signs of cancer in young people—as some members have mentioned—can easily be dismissed. They can also be misdiagnosed, because they are very similar to signs of other issues that may be less harmful and are confused with those issues.

Amy Quinn set out powerfully in her letter the challenges that some young people can face in being able to get their condition appropriately diagnosed and then treated. That demonstrates the need for further work in this area, in particular

with our colleagues in primary care—who may be that first port of call—to enable them to recognise the issue more quickly. Part of the issue is to do with the cultural aspect that cancer is often associated with older individuals and not often with young people. However, the earlier a diagnosis is undertaken, the better. That is why I believe that GPs have an important part to play and part of the work that we need to do is about how to improve understanding and communication within a primary care setting—in particular with our general practitioners.

Of course, I recognise that everyone would be naturally apprehensive about being checked for cancer but, as we recognise, early detection of cancer improves the chances of a positive outcome for treatment. Cancer remains a clear priority for us as a Government, as we acknowledge that we are behind other parts of Europe on cancer survival rates and, with an ageing population, we can all anticipate that there will be an increasing incidence of cancer in future years. The detect cancer early programme is important in helping to improve outcomes for patients.

That leads me on to the education programme that the Teenage Cancer Trust has been involved in. If we educate young people at an early stage about their health, the risks of certain conditions, symptoms and so on—as several members have mentioned—that education can live with them for the rest of their lives and it can help to ensure that they take appropriate action at an early stage should they exhibit any of those symptoms. Equally, young people who have been through such an education programme can assist in giving a gentle nudge to a family member who may be exhibiting symptoms of cancer to take medical advice at an early enough stage.

The Teenage Cancer Trust's work in helping to educate young people in our schools—Aileen McLeod referred to a programme the trust is running in Glasgow—can help to make a real difference to the understanding of those young individuals about both the potential symptoms of cancer and the lifestyle risk factors that can contribute to cancer, which may be extremely important for them in later life, if not when they are teenagers. We will watch with real interest to see how that programme develops. Such work can also complement our detect cancer early programme, which works with adults, by encouraging the young people, as I said, to give that gentle nudge to a parent or family member to take early action if they seem to be exhibiting symptoms.

I am conscious that Ken Macintosh raised an issue about the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. I will ask my colleague who is

leading on that bill whether measures could be taken to assist in strengthening hospital education provision in order to achieve greater consistency.

*Meeting closed at 18:01.*

In drawing my remarks to a close, I offer my sincere thanks for the tremendous work that is done by the Teenage Cancer Trust. In particular, I thank Amy Callaghan for attending the debate along with her colleagues from the Teenage Cancer Trust. I also thank Amy Quinn for the moving letter that she wrote to all MSPs, in which she set out issues that still need to be addressed to improve the way in which we support young people who may have cancer.



---

Available in e-format only. Printed Scottish Parliament documentation is published in Edinburgh by APS Group Scotland.

---

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

For details of documents available to  
order in hard copy format, please contact:  
APS Scottish Parliament Publications on 0131 629 9941.

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000  
Textphone: 0800 092 7100  
Email: [sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk)

e-format first available  
ISBN 978-1-78351-799-2

Revised e-format available  
ISBN 978-1-78351-817-3

---

Printed in Scotland by APS Group Scotland

---