



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 19 November 2014

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 19 November 2014

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Health and Wellbeing

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** Good afternoon. The first item of business is portfolio questions, on health and wellbeing.

Question 1, in the name of Hugh Henry, was not lodged; an explanation has been provided.

#### Primary Healthcare Services (Access)

**2. Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will use technology to improve access to primary healthcare services. (S4O-03702)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** We have made considerable investment in electronic primary care systems over the past 10 years. Developments include two electronic general practitioner record systems; systems to share emergency care information; systems that allow community health workers to access information on the move; telehealth and telecare systems; and an e-pharmacy programme. The next step is to build on that good foundation in order to improve interoperability between systems, develop components that are still missing and create an integrated primary care ecosystem that is linked to acute services.

The GP information technology framework contract is due for repurchase in 2017, which will offer the opportunity to review systems and applications and to define future requirements to inform the procurement process. We have an e-health strategy, which identifies investment priorities, including those in primary care. The strategy is being refreshed to reflect progress and technological advances.

**Jim Hume:** The cabinet secretary should be aware of the work that Borders Deaf and Hard of Hearing Network does with NHS Borders to use SMS texting for deaf and hard of hearing patients when they make and cancel appointments with doctors and dentists. It is to the credit of Jean Proudfoot and her team at Borders Deaf and Hard of Hearing Network in Galashiels that a pilot scheme has been initiated in the Borders to enable mobile texting to be used so that hearing-

impaired people can easily change and cancel audiology appointments.

Will the cabinet secretary join me in congratulating Jean Proudfoot and her team on progressing that project? Will he commend the pilot to other health boards, to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing patients in Scotland can benefit from such modest but effective steps to look after vulnerable patients?

**Alex Neil:** I am always delighted to help members with their local press releases. I am therefore delighted to endorse everything that Mr Hume said, to ensure that he does not need to amend the release.

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary have officials enter into discussions with the Royal National Institute of Blind People in Scotland and Optometry Scotland about the positive uses of tablets and their in-built software for people who are visually impaired?

**Alex Neil:** Absolutely. That is a good example of the importance of the new technology that is coming through. One area in which there are the most new developments is the use of apps. We have a lot of apps throughout the health spectrum.

Jim Hume and Stuart McMillan have highlighted a number of new technologies. I attach a high priority to working with the industry and innovators, as well as with patients, doctors and nurses, to spread the use of new technologies as quickly as possible, because such technologies can do an enormous amount to improve the quality of life of people who are affected by blindness and other ailments.

#### Health Budget 2015-16 (Priorities)

**3. Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what the priorities are for the health budget in 2015-16. (S4O-03703)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The 2020 vision for health and social care sets out the Scottish Government's vision that by 2020 everyone will be able to live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting. The 2020 vision provides a focus for the priorities for the health budget in 2015-16, with three central aims: improving the quality of the care that we provide; improving the health of the population; and securing the value and financial sustainability of health and care services.

**Gavin Brown:** Is the 2015-16 health and wellbeing budget lower in real terms than the budgets in 2012-13 and 2013-14?

**Alex Neil:** As the member knows, we have passed on every penny that has been passed on to us for revenue spending in the health service. On top of doing that, we announced when Mr

Swinney announced his budget a few weeks ago that we are putting an extra £80 million into the health budget for next year.

On the capital side, despite the massive cuts to our capital budget—25 per cent overall—that Westminster has made, the notional value on an annualised basis of the non-profit-distributing and hub projects for next year is more than £300 million.

By any stretch of the imagination, given the very tight budget that we are working to, we are devoting every penny available to our national health service.

**Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** How much additional funding would the Scottish Government have had for the health budget's spending priorities in 2015-16 had the United Kingdom Government not reneged on the 1 per cent pay deal for NHS staff in England?

**Alex Neil:** We estimate that, had the Treasury allocated additional funding to the Department of Health to support the 1 per cent pay deal—which it did not implement south of the border, of course—there would have been additional spend of £300 million in England. The Barnett consequential for health in Scotland would have been just under £30 million, which would have been a substantial additional contribution to improving healthcare in Scotland next year.

### Organ Donation

**4. Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to promote the benefits of organ donation. (S4O-03704)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** Scotland is the only country in the United Kingdom to have consistently run annual high-profile media and advertising campaigns to promote organ donation and transplantation. I launched this year's campaign on 27 October, and it will run until January 2015. Our annual campaigns are the reason why 41 per cent of the population in Scotland are now on the national health service organ donor register, in comparison with 32 per cent in the rest of the UK.

Additionally, on Monday this week, the Scottish Government published the first national report card on organ donation. This is the first time that NHS performance on that has been made available in such a way anywhere in the UK. This year's report card reflects very good progress; Scotland has achieved an almost 100 per cent increase in organ donations and a 62 per cent increase in transplants since 2007. There has also been a 25 per cent reduction in the transplant waiting list since 2006.

**Anne McTaggart:** I thank the minister for the outstanding work that the Scottish Government has been doing. However, in light of the facts that, for every one organ donor, seven lives can be saved, and that 38 people died last year in Scotland alone while waiting for organs, will the Scottish Government back the introduction of a soft opt-out system for organ donation so as to increase the number of available organs, as the Welsh Government has done, leading the way—with Northern Ireland and England also promoting such a law—to save many more lives than at present?

**Michael Matheson:** It is worth keeping it in mind that the part of the UK that has the highest level of organ donations per head of population is Scotland. We need to be careful not to think that the need for an increased number of organs can be addressed by an opt-out system. There are countries that already have an opt-out system that have a very low donation level. That is not a solution in itself.

We are guided on such matters by the Scottish transplant group, which is made up of clinical experts, donor recipients and their families and carers. At this point, the group's opinion is that an opt-out system is not appropriate.

We need to continue to build on the very good progress that we have made through the infrastructure changes that we have made, which have delivered record numbers of organ donations. Through our new plan for transplantation, we intend to continue to drive that progress forward in future years.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** The minister has told us about recent increases in the number of organ donors. Is that part of the impact of the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006, which the Parliament passed eight years ago? How does Scotland compare with countries such as Spain and Holland, which have had a soft opt-out system for a number of years?

**Michael Matheson:** We have made significant progress not because of legislation but because of the infrastructure changes that we have made, such as basing transplant nurses in particular units. Organs can be received from an individual donor only in particular circumstances—in particular in intensive care units. We have taken specific measures to increase the number of organs that can be donated in such circumstances.

It is worth keeping it in mind that, although the Spanish introduced a soft opt-out system back in 1979, it was more than 10 years before they gained any increase in organ donations, because they had not made the necessary infrastructure changes. America has a consistently higher level

of organ donation than any part of Europe, but it does not have an opt-out system. It has such a high level because it has developed its infrastructure.

We must be careful in considering the matter, as there is no single solution that will address the issues and ensure that more organs are donated. We can demonstrate that, because of the work that the Government has progressed in the past few years, record numbers of organs are being donated and a record number of transplants are taking place. We are determined to build on that progress and continue to ensure that Scotland leads the rest of the United Kingdom in this area.

### **Hairmyres Hospital (Inspection Visits)**

**5. Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the recent Healthcare Environment Inspectorate report on Hairmyres hospital. (S4O-03705)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** Reducing healthcare associated infections in Scotland is a key priority for the Scottish Government. The inspection report revealed unacceptable standards in Hairmyres hospital, and I have made it clear that NHS Lanarkshire must address the issues that have been highlighted, as a matter of priority. I know that the board is taking the report very seriously and has drawn up an action plan that details how it intends to resolve the issues and to prevent them from occurring again.

A support team led by Health Protection Scotland is working with the health board to help it to rectify the issues that were raised in the report. The Healthcare Environment Inspectorate will continue to inspect the hospital to ensure that the lessons identified are being taken forward and that the cleanliness, quality and safety of services are maintained at all times.

It is extremely important that patients and the public continue to have confidence in the cleanliness of Scottish hospitals and the quality of NHS Scotland services. That is why we have introduced the inspections as one of a range of measures to tackle healthcare associated infections.

**Margaret McCulloch:** People were shocked by the report, which said that blood and bodily fluids were contaminating trolleys, scales, beds and handrails, that there were faeces on the walls and dirt on the shower floors, and that there was a build-up of dust in a ward that was supposed to have just been deep cleaned. That demonstrates an unprecedented and unacceptable deterioration in standards at Hairmyres hospital. Why have the standards declined so much under this

Government? Does the cabinet secretary believe that there is a connection with the findings of last year's Healthcare Improvement Scotland report on NHS Lanarkshire?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can I hurry you along, please?

**Margaret McCulloch:** Does the report not confirm that Hairmyres hospital and the national health service in Lanarkshire are reaching breaking point?

**Alex Neil:** I gently remind Margaret McCulloch that Hairmyres hospital is a private finance initiative contracted hospital. One of the great tragedies of the previous Administration is that £50 million of NHS Lanarkshire's budget every year is spent on PFI charges. That equates to 25 per cent of all the PFI charges across Scotland—*[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please, so that we can hear the cabinet secretary.

**Alex Neil:** Therefore, trying to blame the situation on the Scottish Government is, with all due respect, absurd. The reason why that has happened at the hospital is that people did not carry out their duties. As I have said—I agree with Margaret McCulloch on this point—that is totally unacceptable.

I am instructing my officials to prepare and issue a tender for a deep-dive review of the PFI contract at Hairmyres, because I am not satisfied that it is providing best value for money for the Scottish taxpayer.

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** Can the cabinet secretary better explain why the significant hygiene failings at Hairmyres were allowed to get to the current state? Does he agree that it is simply a case that they took their eye off the ball on key issues such as hospital hygiene while they were busy campaigning in the referendum?

**Alex Neil:** To the best of my knowledge, none of the cleaners in Hairmyres was involved in the referendum campaign, so I do not think that the link between the referendum campaign and the standard of cleanliness is very strong.

I absolutely accept that the failures in cleanliness are totally unacceptable, but we did not have those inspections under the previous Administration. It did not inspect; it did not check. We are being open and transparent and we are managing the situation on an on-going basis, which is why such things, which previously were never reported, are now being flagged up.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** The inspection system is clearly welcome, but I must say that I called for it two years before it

was introduced, and it was introduced in England two years earlier.

The cabinet secretary has made great play of the role of the non-executives: having them walk round and make sure that things happen. How does he feel about a situation in which there has been an unannounced report, a discussion with the board about the problem, then a follow-up report that showed that a ward that was supposedly deep cleaned had not been deep cleaned? Where were the non-execs in all that? That part of the problem is even more unacceptable.

The problem is not being taken seriously by boards because our inspection system can only report to the cabinet secretary—I appreciate that he is trying to deal with the problem—and it does not have the teeth to enforce the sort of cleaning that we all want to see.

**Alex Neil:** I say very gently to Richard Simpson that he was a minister in the Government before this Government.

**Dr Simpson:** I was not.

**Alex Neil:** At one point he was. If he was so keen on inspections, why did his Administration not introduce them? Why did he wait for us to do it?

However, like me, Richard Simpson is absolutely correct to say that it is right to have the inspection regime. Clearly there has been a failure to keep Hairmyres clean, which is a failure of management there. I expect the board of NHS Lanarkshire—I would expect it of any health board—to take an active interest in establishing why it happened, why it was allowed to continue, why it was not identified and why corrective action was not taken much quicker.

Richard Simpson raises a valid point on all those questions, which, through my officials, I have already communicated in no uncertain terms to the board and senior management team at NHS Lanarkshire.

### **Psychiatric Units (Building Costs)**

#### **6. Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):**

To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the facilities being similar, what the reason is for the difference in the costs of building the Murray royal, Gartnavel royal and New Craigs psychiatric units. (S4O-03706)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** There are substantial differences in the scope and specifications of the facilities that Jenny Marra mentions. Gartnavel royal hospital was completed in 2007, with an estimated capital cost of £17.7 million. New Craigs hospital was completed in 2000, with an estimated

capital value of £16.5 million. Both have floor areas in the region of 9,000 square miles—sorry, 9,000m<sup>2</sup>. [Laughter.]

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

**Alex Neil:** Well, I did say that I was ambitious for the health service.

The Murray royal hospital, which was completed in 2012 and has an estimated capital value of approximately £75 million, is a substantially larger facility with a broader scope of services and has, unlike the other two facilities that Jenny Marra mentioned, a secure care facility. The overall floor area is—I will say this very carefully—approximately 24,200m<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, construction costs vary substantially over time and there is a difference of 12 years between the earliest completion date and the latest.

**Jenny Marra:** The cabinet secretary's answer is very interesting, because there are actually less beds—

**Members:** Fewer!

**Jenny Marra:** —in the Murray royal psychiatric unit than there are in New Craigs, yet it cost £50 million more to build. I wonder whether the cabinet secretary would put his auditors or national health service auditors on the case of that £50 million increase.

Why did the Murray royal drop £10 million to £11 million in value on the day on which it was taken on to NHS Tayside's books? The NHS Tayside board has not come up with an answer to that; maybe the cabinet secretary knows the answer.

**Alex Neil:** Jenny Marra will probably have heard of apples and oranges. My advice is never to compare the two or to try to draw conclusions from doing so. To compare the costs that are associated with the Murray royal with the other two facilities is nonsensical for the reasons that I outlined—the time difference, the configuration of services and facilities, and because Murray royal has a secure care facility. It is to be expected that building something 12 years later would cost more, particularly during a period when construction costs were rising substantially. If the hospital was bigger in terms of the square meterage, and if it included a secure facility, even a poor economist would expect a substantial price difference.

### **Scottish Medicines Consortium (Breast Cancer Drugs)**

**7. Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the Scottish Medicines Consortium



decision not to make the drugs Kadcylla and Perjeta available for breast cancer patients, in light of them being available in England under the cancer drugs fund. (S4O-03707)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The Scottish Medicines Consortium makes decisions independently of ministers. Its decisions on these drugs are disappointing for many and, like many patient groups, I encourage the manufacturer to make them available at a lower cost so that more people can have them as a treatment option in future.

Last week, NHS England announced that these drugs are included among those that are being reviewed in England in order to reduce the products and indications in the cancer drugs fund to bring its projected spend within budget.

**Alex Johnstone:** The minister and I are aware that, in many cases, these drugs can prolong life, perhaps for only a short time, in those who have inoperable cancers. Given that there is a possibility that the decisions might be reconsidered if the drugs companies lower prices, can the minister give any indication of a possible timescale for achieving that objective and having these drugs approved in Scotland?

**Alex Neil:** The member raises a substantial point. Under the reform mechanisms for the SMC, which we reformed last year, we encourage drugs companies to have informal discussions with the SMC before they make a formal application. That allows them to negotiate on cost and price and so, when the formal application is made, the chances of success are substantially enhanced.

One of the other reforms that we made is that when a drug is rejected, there is the opportunity for reasonably rapid resubmission. As I have said earlier and in public, I encourage the manufacturers of these particular drugs to reconsider the price and, at the earliest opportunity, offer the taxpayer and those who are suffering a better deal so that, hopefully, the drugs can be approved.

It is very important to do everything that we can to make sure that people who are suffering from cancer, particularly if they are in an end-of-life situation, have the fullest possible access to the drugs that they need to prolong their life. On Friday, I was at a meeting with a cancer sufferer who has a terminal diagnosis. I am absolutely of the view that, even if the drug extends life by only a few months, we should try as far as possible to make it available, because those extra few months with family and friends matter to the people who are affected and to their families.

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** Does the cabinet secretary understand the extreme disappointment of such

breast cancer patients, given that there is a £40 million new medicines fund for orphan and end-of-life medicines? Were these drugs reviewed using the patient and clinical engagement process? Does the cabinet secretary expect the whole of the £40 million to be spent on orphan and end-of-life drugs this year?

**Alex Neil:** These drugs were reviewed under the PACE mechanism but were still turned down by the full SMC for the reasons that I have explained. I should emphasise that any patient who believes that they would benefit from the drug under the new system of independent application and review can still apply through and with the support of their clinicians to get access to the drug. Therefore although the SMC has made a general decision in the meantime that the drugs should not be generally available, people can still access them through what used to be called the independent patient treatment and review process.

#### General Practitioners at the Deep End

**8. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the benefits of the project, general practitioners at the deep end, which is being carried out in deprived communities. (S4O-03708)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** We welcome the work of the deep-end group of GPs, in particular their recommendations on how we can tackle inequalities in the most deprived areas of Scotland. One of the recommendations was to have link workers in general practice who would signpost and support patients to sources of support in the community and relieve some of the burden on GPs. We have committed to funding that project for five years.

Recognising the challenges in the national general medical services contract in relation to practices whose patients face the greatest inequalities, the Scottish Government has also significantly altered the 2014-15 GMS contract to free up those practitioners so that they can devote more time to the complex problems of their patients.

We are working closely with the deep-end group and with other national health service organisations to develop the most appropriate solutions for areas of deprivation.

**Bob Doris:** I was going to refer to the link worker project in my supplementary. I visited a project in Possilpark with the cabinet secretary to see the good work that link workers have been doing. He mentioned that the programme is being funded for five years. Initially, it was for seven practices in the deep-end 100 most deprived communities. Is that being extended further? What

review has there been of the scheme? Can I look forward to more patients with complex health needs across the Glasgow region, who would definitely benefit from link workers, seeing an enhancement of that service in the years to come?

**Michael Matheson:** I am sure that the member recognised during his visit that a key part of the programme is the evaluation of the link worker role to see how link workers can be used most effectively. Initially, the link worker programme was to be run for about three years. We discussed it with the deep-end practice team and they felt that a five-year programme would be much more effective in allowing the overall benefits to be evaluated. We have therefore extended the programme for a further two years.

Alongside that provision for a five-year period, we have commissioned the University of Glasgow to undertake an evaluation over the initial two to three years of the link worker programme. Once we have that initial evaluation, we will be in a position to make a decision about rolling out the programme to other deep-end practices and to consider what model is the most effective way for link workers to operate in those deep-end practices.

I assure the member that we are determined to do what we can to support these practices, which are working in our most deprived communities, and to do so in a way that delivers the most effective change to allow them to improve their care of patients, many of whom have very complex health needs. Evaluation work will then inform how we can look at rolling out the programme across more of our deep-end practices in Scotland.

### NHS Fife (Nurse Numbers)

**9. Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact the introduction of the mandatory workforce and workload planning tool for nursing has had on the number of nurses in NHS Fife. (S4O-03709)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** NHS Fife recently completed its first ever review of the general adult in-patient nursing workforce across all seven national health service sites using the nursing and midwifery workload and workforce planning tools. The review also considered NHS Fife's existing nurses' own professional judgment and local quality outcomes. As a result of the review, NHS Fife will be increasing its workforce by more than 100 registered nurses and I understand that recruitment is under way to fill those new posts.

**Annabelle Ewing:** What reassurances can the cabinet secretary give that the front-line NHS budget will continue to be protected to ensure that

the improvements that are being made by NHS Fife can continue to be delivered?

**Alex Neil:** Protecting front-line health services is an absolute priority for this Government. We will protect them by increasing the NHS front-line budget despite cuts in the overall budget from Westminster. Scotland's health service will receive in full the Barnett consequential increases in health spending down south. In 2015-16, territorial boards will receive allocation increases of 2.7 per cent, which is above forecast inflation, reflecting the importance that we attach to protecting our front-line health services.

### Rural National Health Service Boards (Clinical Staff)

**10. Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to help rural NHS boards recruit and retain clinical staff. (S4O-03710)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** The Scottish Government remains committed to the delivery of sustainable, high-quality healthcare in remote and rural areas. While it is the responsibility of NHS boards to recruit staff to ensure that they can deliver services, I expect boards to review current service provision where there are recurring recruitment difficulties, including using alternative staffing structures in situations in which that would meet the needs of patients.

We are supporting boards in that work. For example, I recently announced an additional £40 million of funding for general practitioner and primary care services over the next year, which will help fund local initiatives to improve GP and primary care services where there are particular pressures, such as in rural, remote rural and island communities.

**Aileen McLeod:** Having visited the Galloway community hospital with me in August, the cabinet secretary will be aware of concerns, particularly regarding the recruitment and retention of accident and emergency staff at the hospital in Stranraer as well as around the lack of training opportunities. What measures is he considering to help NHS Dumfries and Galloway to manage that situation?

**Alex Neil:** I had a successful visit to Stranraer, and I can update the member on exactly the point that she raises, although it is the responsibility of the board to ensure that the correct staffing levels are in place to deliver safe patient care.

I have been advised by the board that its medical staffing position has improved and it has recently recruited an additional 2.5 whole-time equivalent doctors. The board has advised that that takes the complement to 4.3 whole-time equivalent doctors out of a funded establishment

of 6.5. As a consequence, there are no uncovered shifts in the rotas up to January 2015.

The board continues with recruitment activity. Official Information Services Division statistics show that workforce numbers in Dumfries and Galloway are up by 5.3 per cent under the Scottish National Party and that emergency medicine consultants are up by 307.5 per cent under the SNP, which is equivalent to 3.1 whole-time equivalent positions.

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

The cabinet secretary stated that the £40 million was additional funding. My understanding is that it came out of the integration fund and that it is, therefore, not additional funding. He made that point to the Health and Sport Committee a couple of weeks ago.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can I hurry you along, please?

**Rhoda Grant:** Given that the issue concerns urban and rural areas, is it not time that the cabinet secretary took control of it and gave us an NHS that is fit for the 21st century?

**Alex Neil:** There are big pressures on GP services and primary care and on acute services. One of the reasons why there are so many pressures on acute services, not only in rural and remote rural areas and island communities but throughout Scotland, is that we need to invest more in our primary care services. For example, we have evidence to show that many people turn up at accident and emergency departments because their treatment is turned around there within four hours, which means that they do not have to wait for days, weeks or longer for a GP appointment. The £40 million is directed at rural areas, deep-end practices and those practices where there is an above-average ageing population, particularly where there is a very elderly population. As rural areas have a disproportionate share of elderly people, they will benefit enormously from that £40 million.

**Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP):** With the Government's emphasis on moving patients away from the acute services into primary care, what steps is it taking to recruit and retain nurses and health visitors in rural communities such as mine, Aberdeenshire West?

**Alex Neil:** We have quite a number and wide range of initiatives. What is important is to ensure that nurses and allied health professionals have the facilities to work with. I would argue that the heavy investment that we are putting into many areas is beneficial. For example, in Grampian, when the new Inverurie centre—which I know has the support of the local member—is built in two or three years' time, it will be seen to be a very good

example of how we retain good-quality staff in rural areas.

I have been round the current Inverurie centre. Although the staff there do a fantastic job, including some operations, the need for a new facility is urgent, which is why we have given the go-ahead and the new facility will be opened in 2017.

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Questions 12 and 13 have been withdrawn. I have explanations—[*Interruption.*]

I come back to question 11, from George Adam.

**Local Authority Care Homes**

**11. George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I was getting worried for a minute, Presiding Officer.

To ask the Scottish Government how important local authority care homes are in the provision of care for older people. (S4O-03711)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** Local authority care homes are extremely important in the provision of care for older people. The Scottish Government's reshaping care for older people programme aims to keep people living as independently as possible in a homely setting, including in care homes. Local authorities have an important role to play in ensuring that there is provision of the right type of care settings in their areas now and in the future.

**The Presiding Officer:** Now I can announce that questions 12 and 13 have been—

**Alex Neil:** Supplementary!

**The Presiding Officer:** You want a supplementary?

**George Adam:** Is it me, Presiding Officer? [*Laughter.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** I got confused because you did not mention Paisley. [*Laughter.*]

**George Adam:** You will be glad to know that I do not intend to.

Will the cabinet secretary join me in congratulating my constituents who campaigned to retain Hunterhill care home? Renfrewshire Council tried to close it, which caused understandable outrage among family members, local Scottish National Party councillors and staff, who all campaigned to retain the home. Does that not prove that councils such as Labour-controlled Renfrewshire Council should consult members of the public more when they make such decisions?

**Alex Neil:** Not only do I agree with George Adam but I am delighted to contribute to his press release, which I am sure is already en route to the *Paisley Daily Express*.

It is entirely a matter for local partners to plan provision to meet local needs. However, I congratulate all involved in the campaign on their efforts to extend the consultation on the closure of Hunterhill care home. They have convinced Renfrewshire Council of the case for keeping the home open, which will ensure that the residents—some of whom have dementia—will be able to remain in their home without the need for a move, which might have caused disruption or extra distress.

It is extremely important that, in facing up to the challenge of delayed discharges, we retain and build on the capacity and high-quality provision that we have in residential homes throughout Scotland. That is a vital part of our health and social care system.

**The Presiding Officer:** For the third time, I say that the questions from Graeme Dey and Mary Fee have been withdrawn. I have an explanation.

#### **Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva**

**14. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides for people and their families living with fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva. (S4O-03714)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** I acknowledge the devastating effects on individuals and families of the very rare disease fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva, which is often called FOP.

The combined bone clinic at Yorkhill hospital in Glasgow provides support for children with FOP through a multidisciplinary team of specialist physicians, geneticists, occupational therapists and an orthopaedic surgeon.

**Bruce Crawford:** Does the minister agree that FOP is one of the rarest and most disabling genetic conditions known to medicine? It causes bone to form in muscles, tendons, ligaments and other connective tissue. It progressively restricts movement and, in effect, imprisons a person in their body's bone.

I have a family in my constituency with a member who is badly affected by FOP. The family seeks help through the open market shared equity scheme or any other scheme that might be available to improve the quality of their housing. Will the minister agree to my meeting an appropriate official to discuss how we might best address the family's needs, not to help the condition to be cured but to ensure that their quality of life is significantly improved?

**Michael Matheson:** Bruce Crawford is correct to highlight the challenging nature of the condition, its progressive nature and how it can increasingly

result in the loss of someone's mobility. He is also correct to highlight the open market shared equity scheme, which we developed for people on low to medium incomes to be able to access house ownership. It has as a particular priority those who have a disability, are social renters or are members of the armed forces, including veterans.

I am more than happy to ensure that the member is able to meet a group of our officials who can assist him in considering his constituents' case to see what assistance can be provided to them.

## Business Motion

14:40

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-11581, 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 25 November 2014

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Vale of Leven Inquiry

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Legal Writings (Counterparts and Delivery) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 26 November 2014

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

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

*followed by* First Minister's Statement on the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2014-15

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2014-15

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 27 November 2014

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Members' Business

*followed by* Continuation of the Scottish Government Debate on the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2014-15

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 2 December 2014

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 3 December 2014

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Education and Lifelong Learning

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 4 December 2014

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[Joe FitzPatrick].

*Motion agreed to.*

## Decision Time

14:40

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is decision time. There are no questions to be put as a result of today's business, so we will move swiftly on.

## First Minister

14:40

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is nominations for First Minister. I have received two valid nominations for the selection of the Parliament's nominee as First Minister. The nominations, in alphabetical order, are Ruth Davidson and Nicola Sturgeon.

I will ask each nominee to speak in support of their candidacy for up to five minutes. After the nominees have spoken, members will be asked to cast their vote for their preferred candidate. A separate vote will be called for each candidate, and members may vote only once. A note explaining the procedures to be followed this afternoon has been placed on each member's desk.

Once the voting has been completed, any member who has not yet voted will be invited to cast a vote to abstain. There will be a short break of a few minutes while the result is verified and I will then announce the result of the voting. A candidate will be elected if a simple majority is obtained. No account will be taken of any votes to abstain in establishing whether a simple majority has been achieved.

We move on to the selection process. I call Ruth Davidson.

14:42

**Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** I stand today as others have done before me—Alex Salmond, Robin Harper, John Swinney, Dennis Canavan and half a dozen others besides—knowing that I do not lead the largest party in the Parliament and realistic about my prospects of becoming First Minister, at least for now.

However, I stand for an important reason. But one issue has dominated the political landscape for the entirety of this session of Parliament, and the Deputy First Minister, who is seeking to ascend one rung, finds herself on the opposite side of the issue from the majority of people in this country. So today, I offer an alternative, as someone who wants Scotland to prosper as part of our United Kingdom, not outside it, and as a member of this Parliament who wants it to work better, using the powers that it has to improve public life in Scotland, and the powers that are coming to limit the financial burden on families across our country.

I want both Scotland's Governments to work together for the betterment of all our people. I do not want false grievance to be held up in order to pit one against the other—Holyrood against

Westminster. My stated aim is to develop devolution, not to end it—to use this devolved Parliament to serve the people and empower them, and to loosen the constraints of the state, pushing power into communities and increasing freedom and choice.

I want parents to be free to raise their children without a state-appointed guardian being imposed on them. I want tenants to be free to buy their council house and pass that asset on to their children. There should be greater economic freedom, with more of the money that is earned staying in the pockets of those who earned it. There should be freedom for football fans to be subject to the same laws as everybody else. There should be freedom for parents to pick a school for their child and to have different types of schools from which to choose; and freedom to break the council monopoly that says that there is only one way to teach and one way to learn—there is not, and Scotland can learn from countries where that freedom of choice has driven up standards for future generations.

Reform of our public services to make them more effective and responsive to people's needs is long overdue in Scotland. It is a debate that has been ducked for 15 years, but it is a conversation that we need to start having right now; failing to do so is hitting those who rely on such services hardest, and it is a dereliction of our duty as parliamentarians.

Freedom, yes, but there are responsibilities, too, and choices to be made. The way in which the single police force is being rolled out urgently needs to be reviewed. Simply stamping the rest of the country with the Strathclyde mould and expecting it to fit is not working. Local communities need to feel that they have got their community police force back.

The messy web of justice policy needs to be untangled. Asking members to vote down corroboration without knowing what its replacement would be was an act of either desperation or hubris—I cannot work out which. We need to start from first principles: how do we better secure justice for our victims and fairness for the accused? We need a wholesale review of the law of evidence.

Our national health service must stop having sticking-plaster fixes. I have more cause than most in this chamber to thank our NHS, which saved not only my life but my legs. I have always been happy to pay a contribution towards my prescriptions, as were the vast majority of people who were asked to do so. Extending free prescriptions to those who could afford to pay takes £60 million out of the NHS budget each year. Free stuff is nice. Free stuff is easy. However, I think that £60 million would be better

spent funding 1,000 extra nurses and midwives for our hospitals.

I stand here today knowing that I will likely lose, but I stand to offer a different vision of Scotland: a Scotland where we value our vocational education as highly as our academic education; a Scotland where we do not decimate our college places for the shibboleth of no university contribution; a Scotland that recognises that children learn differently and should have the opportunity to be taught differently, with choice driving up standards; a Scotland where local police, local services and local colleges answer to the communities that they serve, rather than to a central Government hell-bent on pulling all power to Holyrood; a Scotland that acknowledges that there is no such thing as Government money, only the money that Governments take from the working men and women of this country—and we resolve to ensure that they keep more of it; and a Scotland where Government is there to help, not to hector.

I stand to offer that vision of Scotland and I promise that, whether elected to the office of First Minister or—more likely—not, I will work with anyone who will help achieve it.

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Nicola Sturgeon.

14:47

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Nicola Sturgeon):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I will keep my opening remarks relatively brief.

First, I thank Ruth Davidson for her candidacy today. I suspect that I am correct in saying that there is not much that she and I agree on, but I think that we probably will agree today that having two women contest the post of First Minister is a great advert for our modern country. [*Applause.*]

Only a matter of weeks ago, I would not have imagined that I would be seeking nomination today as the First Minister of Scotland. To be doing so is a great honour and an immense responsibility. The boots that I seek to fill are big ones, but I will do my best to wear them in my own way. In seeking to become not just the First Minister but the first woman First Minister of our country, I am very aware of the additional responsibility that I will carry if elected: the responsibility to help every woman and girl in our country fulfil their own potential.

It is fair to say that recent political events have surprised all of us. In the run-up to the referendum—and, indeed, since—democracy in Scotland has flourished as never before. We hear all too often that people have disconnected from politics, but the 85 per cent turnout that we saw in

September shows that here in Scotland the reverse is true. People are more engaged than ever in our political process and they have high expectations that we in this Parliament will meet their needs and aspirations. Put bluntly, their hopes are in our hands; it is our responsibility as a Parliament and as a Government to ensure that we meet them. That presents us with challenges, but also with tremendous opportunities. There is no better service that we can give Scotland than to improve the prospects of her people.

If Parliament elects me to be First Minister, I will work with each and every member to make Scotland a better, fairer and more socially just place for all. Although we may differ on the best way of achieving that goal—those of us who believe in independence and those of us who do not—I know that that is a commitment that all members will share and do their very best to uphold.

We live in a new era of Scottish democracy. Those whom we represent expect us to give our very best, and we—all of us—must ensure that we do not disappoint them. They expect to see us debate vigorously, but they do not want us to divide rancorously. So let us work together to create a future for Scotland that is worthy of their dreams and their trust.

I ask for the support of Parliament for my candidacy to be First Minister of and for all of Scotland—a First Minister who will always have big ambitions for this country and who, day in and day out, will apply herself to the job of protecting our public services, supporting our businesses and tackling inequality.

I am ready and willing to take on those responsibilities. There is a big job to be done. With Parliament's approval, I look forward now to getting on and doing it.

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you. We move to voting. Members should ensure that their card is inserted correctly in their console, which will help the process. I remind members that they must vote once only and must use their yes button. If any members record a vote more than once or record a vote other than a yes vote, their votes will be treated as spoiled. Once the votes for both candidates have been completed, members who have not voted for a candidate will be given an opportunity to vote to abstain by pressing their yes button. I will announce the results once all the votes have been cast and verified.

The first vote is for Ruth Davidson. Members who wish to cast their vote for her should vote yes now.

*Members voted.*

**The Presiding Officer:** Voting time has ended.

The next vote is for Nicola Sturgeon. Members who wish to cast their vote for her should vote yes now.

*Members voted.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next vote is for any members who have not yet voted and who wish to record an abstention. Members who wish to abstain should press their yes button now.

*Members voted.*

**The Presiding Officer:** That concludes this round of voting. There will be a break of approximately five minutes while the votes are verified.

I will explain to members what the delay was all about: we had to verify each vote to make sure that no one had voted twice. I am quite sure that, by the time we come to select a future First Minister, we will be able to do it a lot more quickly.

In the vote on the selection of the Parliament's nominee for First Minister, the total number of votes cast was 120. The number of votes cast for each candidate was: Ruth Davidson 15, Nicola Sturgeon 66, Abstentions 39. There were no spoiled votes.

#### **Votes for Ruth Davidson**

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)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

#### **Votes for Nicola Sturgeon**

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)  
 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)  
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (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) (Ind)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

### Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)

Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** As the result is valid, and as Nicola Sturgeon has received more votes than the total number of votes for the other candidate, I declare that Nicola Sturgeon is selected as the Parliament's nominee for appointment as First Minister. *[Applause.]* As required by the Scotland Act 1998, I shall now recommend to Her Majesty that she appoint Nicola Sturgeon as the First Minister.

As the Scottish Parliament's first woman Presiding Officer, I congratulate Nicola Sturgeon on being the first woman to be nominated to the position of First Minister of Scotland.

First Minister, on behalf of the Parliament, I offer you my sincere good wishes as you take on your new role. I look forward to working with you.

15:06

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I offer my congratulations to Nicola Sturgeon on her election as First Minister. In many ways, I consider this to be a double celebration, as she is the first woman to be appointed to that office and the first woman to lead the Scottish National Party.

We became members of the Scottish Parliament on the same day and we have for a number of years had the same policy brief, so we have exchanged views on countless occasions across the chamber. Presiding Officer, although it will not surprise you to know that Nicola Sturgeon and I have not always agreed, I have certainly respected her contribution. Some of those exchanges have been robust—I am sure that they will continue to be robust—and others have been more consensual. I trust that she will accept my congratulations in the spirit in which they are offered.

I hope that the fact that three out of five party responses today are being delivered by women is recognition of how far we have travelled in recent years and how the Parliament differs from other places.

Nicola Sturgeon's place in Scottish political history is assured, given that she is the first woman to hold her post. There is no doubting that this is a symbolic moment, but what she does in post matters far more. I sincerely hope that she will use her position to promote women's role in public life by making positive steps towards gender balance.

There is no reason why a 50:50 gender balance cannot become a reality in government, in the Parliament and across the public sector. Nicola Sturgeon has the power to achieve that, and I will be happy to stand shoulder to shoulder with her if she chooses to do so.

Next week, we will hear from the First Minister what her programme for government will contain and who she will choose to serve in her Cabinet. I will have more to say about that on another day. She tells us that the policies at the heart of her Administration will be social justice and equality. I welcome that. I say to her genuinely that, if that is the case, will she consider replacing the 4,000 teaching posts and will she reinstate the 140,000 college places that have been cut? Will she do something to increase the number of students from the poorest backgrounds taking up university places? I am sure that she agrees that education provides the opportunity to secure a better future and deliver social justice.

In the past few weeks, many—including me—have commented on the SNP Administration's failings since it came to power in 2007 and particularly in the past three years when it has had a majority in the Parliament. I welcome the reports of Nicola Sturgeon's Saturday conference speech and, in particular, her pledge to tackle poverty and inequality. However, I gently remind her that the SNP has been responsible for many of the relevant policies over the past seven years. Even though it was her Government that cut £1 billion from the anti-poverty budget, I am always willing to work with her in the cause of social justice.

Although I welcome that new priority, I had hoped that the SNP would have addressed the problems facing the people of Scotland before now. If she brings forward credible policies for dealing with those problems, she will get the support of Labour members, and we stand ready to help with that task.

People know that what counts is action, not words. It is genuinely disappointing that it appears that action is on hold until her party manifesto for the 2016 Holyrood elections, although I hope that we can work together now to do something before then. That apparently includes the pledge to increase the number of hours of free childcare—a pledge that we warmly welcome. Having been told during the referendum campaign that that could be done only if Scotland achieved independence, we

now find that it can be done anyway—but I hope that it can be done now and not at some later date. Again, we stand ready to help.

One area in which the new First Minister can provide us with some clarity is the living wage. She announced to her party conference that cleaning staff employed by Mitie and subcontracted to the Scottish Government will be paid the living wage by the end of the year. That is a positive development. However, although I welcome that, I think that we can do much better than a piecemeal, company-by-company approach.

Three weeks ago, the SNP had the opportunity to ensure that every company that wishes to secure a public sector contract pays the living wage. The SNP rejected that proposal, although the First Minister signed a living wage pledge back in March. For the 400,000 people who are paid less than the living wage, I invite the SNP and the First Minister to support Labour's campaign to make payment of the living wage the expectation, not the exception, in all public sector contracts.

Although it was a long apprenticeship for Nicola Sturgeon, she tells us that she was party to all decisions while she worked with Alex Salmond. I will watch with interest to see whether we get more of the same or whether she strikes a different tone, adopts a different style and has different content. I genuinely congratulate her on her appointment and very much look forward to First Minister's question time tomorrow.

15:12

**Ruth Davidson:** After a hard-fought contest for the position of First Minister, in the end my opponent just shaded it. I promise that I will not demand a recount.

Today, the Parliament has elected Nicola Sturgeon as the First Minister of Scotland. On behalf of myself and my party, I offer her our warmest congratulations. When she knocked on her first door in her home constituency of Cunninghame South during the 1987 general election, there was no Scottish Parliament, no devolved Government and no post of First Minister. She could have had no idea, when she chapped that door, that she was setting out on a path that would lead more than a quarter of a century later to that high office and Bute house.

Nicola Sturgeon's completion of that journey is a great personal achievement, and it is an accomplishment to secure office as Scotland's first woman First Minister. As women around the world seek equality and equity where there currently is none, I am personally delighted that they will look to Scotland and see another woman having fought her way, on merit, to the top—women are not just

leading the Government but chairing the Parliament.

Of course, the Conservatives led the way in giving the country its first female leader, who was Prime Minister between 1979 and 1990. I know that Nicola Sturgeon has always seen that Prime Minister as a personal role model who has inspired her in everything that she has done. I look forward to seeing whether the First Minister can find within her the iron resolve that marks out all true leaders, whether they are male or female.

With an apprenticeship of 10 years as deputy party leader and seven as the Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon is eminently qualified. If I may offer a personal opinion, she is in many ways a more skilful politician than her immediate predecessor—she has been deployed more than once as a velvet glove to a clunking fist.

There are a number of positives to welcome today, and welcome them I do. However, Scotland needs not just a new First Minister but a change of direction. Above all, after two years that have been consumed by the single issue of Scotland's constitutional future, it is time to get back to the practical, day-to-day issues that concern Scottish families the most—issues such as jobs, opportunity, taxes and the efficient delivery of public services. Such issues have been an accompaniment for most of the parliamentary session, and we must move them back to where they belong: front and centre in all our priorities.

The Scottish Conservatives are clear about the reforms that are needed to make Scotland better. We need greater choice and diversity in our education system, to drive up standards. We need to lower the tax burden on ordinary Scots. We need policies to promote personal responsibility and we need to provide a ladder of aspiration for disadvantaged families.

Those are the Scottish Conservatives' priorities; the new First Minister will have her own. It is inevitable that many things will divide us, and Conservative members will hold the First Minister and her Government to account for their actions and policies. It is healthy and necessary for Scotland's democracy that we do so.

We will not oppose for the sake of opposition. We will make common cause with the new First Minister where agreement can be found, to make Scotland better. I believe that both our Governments in this country—in Holyrood and at Westminster—are working to better the nation. People at home demand no less.

We have been through a period in our history when, perhaps understandably, the divisions between the two sides in the referendum debate have been inflamed and sometimes distorted. Too often, not just policies and views but motives and

character have been questioned. I hope that the election of a new First Minister of Scotland will act as a brake on that dismal political dead end. I hope that the politics of division will pass and that the politics of debate and discourse, and pragmatism and respect, will win out.

We can still disagree. I know the new First Minister, and we both know that the rocks will melt in the sun before we stop disagreeing. However, I hope that we can do that with mutual respect and mutual acknowledgement that all of us—Conservative, Liberal, Labour and SNP—seek to make Scotland a better place.

In that spirit, I take the opportunity to congratulate Nicola Sturgeon on her appointment. I wish her well in the task that awaits.

15:16

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):**

This is a wonderful day for equality. As First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon has been elevated to a special and select group of powerful women in the world. She joins the illustrious company of Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, of Norway and Denmark respectively—countries from which she draws inspiration. I discourage her from consulting Tatiana Turanskaya, who is the Prime Minister of the self-declared independent republic of Transnistria. However, she might wish to look for advice from Iveta Radičová of Slovakia, who has been credited with restoring the relationship with a large neighbour after her predecessor put it under significant strain. Nicola Sturgeon might be especially interested in what Iveta Radičová has to say, given that Radičová was deposed by her predecessor only two years later.

At times, Nicola Sturgeon and I might exchange cross words in the chamber, but let me begin with praise. I hope that she is as proud today as her parents looked on Saturday. This is an outstanding personal achievement.

I want to set out what my party and I will do in response to a Sturgeon Government. Where we disagree, we will say so, and sometimes robustly. That is our job. Where we agree, we will also say so. That is our job, too.

If the Parliament will allow me, I will make two points of difference. Our new First Minister wants to represent all Scotland. We commend that. She wants to represent not just the people who supported her in the referendum, but the whole country. However, she must realise that when she uses her position to return immediately to campaigning for a win in another referendum, she is in danger of diminishing the democratic expression of more than 2 million no voters. I am not expecting Nicola Sturgeon to change her

views on Scotland's constitutional future—I would never deny her that right. However, her Government has had more than three and a half years to make the case for independence. In the remaining 18 months, would not it be respectful to invest all her power and energy in running the country?

Nicola Sturgeon will also know that we strongly disagree with the Government's approach to justice—on police centralisation, on the abolition of corroboration, on the massive expansion in stop and search and on the carrying of guns by officers. I hope that she takes the opportunity in the pending reshuffle to find a new and more liberal Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

Just as we will speak out when we disagree, I can tell Nicola Sturgeon that we will not hunt for reasons to oppose when it is sensible to support. She knows that we have worked constructively with her Government on every single budget. When we secured more funds for our colleges, for nursery education, for thousands of two-year-olds, for housing, for free school meals and more, we voted for those budgets.

I am searching for common ground on powers for this Parliament, too. We advocated the inclusion of Nicola Sturgeon's party on the Smith commission, and we look forward to reaching an agreement that will make a big difference for Scotland.

The responsibility that Nicola Sturgeon now takes is great. At times, it will be a personal burden. We will scrutinise her, but we will always strive to judge her fairly.

I am sure that I am not alone in the chamber in feeling a certain degree of envy today: to be in Nicola Sturgeon's shoes, for the opportunity that the office of First Minister presents to change Scotland, and to create a stronger economy and a fairer society so that everyone can get a chance to get on. However, this is her moment, and I wish her well.

15:21

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I add my warm congratulations to Nicola Sturgeon on her selection by Parliament. I am sure that a comparison with the first woman Prime Minister will be beneath Her Majesty when the moment comes for her to approve the appointment on our behalf.

I wish Nicola Sturgeon very well in the job that she is about to undertake. We had the opportunity of working together on a number of occasions during the referendum campaign. Whether we agreed or disagreed on any particular point of policy or strategy, that experience confirmed what

I already believed to be true: that Nicola Sturgeon is a highly capable, professional and very impressive figure on the political landscape of Scotland.

Over the past few days, Nicola Sturgeon has set out a strong social justice emphasis in her hopes and aspirations for her time in office. There are many opportunities to give effect to that aspiration, including the adoption of a fairer approach to local taxes, which would not only ensure that people such as us, who can afford to contribute more do so, but mean investing in the services on which people depend. That could even end early the real-terms pay cuts that are still taking place in the public sector.

Over the next few months, we will find out whether this Parliament will have the ability to exercise additional powers, to pull different economic levers, to close the gap between rich and poor in our society and to improve provision for people in it. I hope that we will see a resolute and creative approach to using all the powers that are at the disposal of the Parliament—existing and new—to ensure that those objectives are achieved.

Let me set out two particular areas in which I hope to see from the new Scottish Government a stronger line than we have seen in the past. First, the transatlantic trade and investment partnership is a long and boring name for a dramatic corporate power grab that is currently being negotiated between Europe and the United States. I know that the Scottish Government does not have a formal role in that negotiation, but it does have a voice. In the past, the Scottish Government has described that trade deal as “good news” for Scotland, and has highlighted the potential for economic benefits.

Right now, however, that trade deal is beginning to fall apart. The French Government has indicated that it will not support the investor-state dispute settlement procedures that TTIP contains and which would allow the potential for corporations to sue Governments for having the nerve to protect social and environmental standards. The French Minister of State for Foreign Trade, the Promotion of Tourism and French Nationals Abroad said:

“We have to preserve the right of the state to set and apply its own standards ... and to allow the people of France, and the world, to assert their values.”

Scotland might not have a seat at the negotiating table, but I hope that Nicola Sturgeon will use the office of First Minister and the voice of the Scottish Government. If we do so and we galvanise public opposition to that corporate power grab, the killer blow can be dealt to it.

I turn to the second area in which I hope to see a stronger line. I hope that the Scottish Government will clarify its position on unconventional gas extraction. Concern has been expressed on the issue, including by Nicola Sturgeon's own back benchers and by people in communities right across Scotland, but we have heard it confirmed only recently that unconventional gas developments can take place in Scotland—that they will be assessed “on their merits”.

It is clear that such developments cannot take place without planning consent, so even if we do not get additional powers to control licensing, we already have the ability to say no to the industry. Ministers will soon have to make decisions on unconventional gas developments in Scotland, and many of us will feel entitled to treat the first such decision as a test case. We do not want mere caution in this area: we want Scotland's Government to say no, unambiguously, to what is a destructive and unnecessary new wave of fossil fuel extraction in Scotland.

I once again offer my sincere congratulations and goodwill, and my hope that the Scottish Government under Nicola Sturgeon's stewardship will make the right decisions in all those areas.

15:25

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Presiding Officer, I thank you very much indeed for your kind words earlier. I thank the party leaders for their kind words too—long may they continue. Last, but most important, I thank my fellow members of Parliament for giving me the honour and privilege of being their nominee as the next First Minister of Scotland.

My pledge today to every citizen of our country is simple but heartfelt. I will be First Minister for all of Scotland: regardless of your politics or your point of view, my job is to serve you and I promise that I will do so to the very best of my ability.

This is a special and very proud moment for me, a working-class girl from Ayrshire given the job of heading up the Government of Scotland. It is also a big moment for my family, and I am delighted that they have joined me here today. I am particularly delighted—relieved, even—to note that, so far at any rate, my niece and nephews appear to be on their best behaviour.

I am so grateful to all my family here today, and in particular to my mum, my dad, my sister and my husband for the unwavering support that they have always given me in everything that I have chosen to do. Now that I am First Minister, I suspect that I will need that support more than ever, and I am very lucky in knowing that it will always be there.

I also thank my constituency office staff for the invaluable work that they do each and every day for me and for my constituents in Glasgow Southside.

Like you, Presiding Officer, I have been a member of this Parliament since its re-establishment in 1999. That means that I have had the opportunity at close quarters to watch and learn from all my predecessors as First Minister. Each of them, in their own unique ways, has been a passionate and diligent advocate for Scotland. I have the greatest respect for all of them—for the late Donald Dewar and for Henry McLeish, Jack McConnell and Alex Salmond—and I am genuinely humbled that my name will now be added to that distinguished list.

That our Parliament and Government have, in just 15 short years, come to be so firmly established and—dare I say it?—respected in our national life is testament to the quality of their stewardship and their leadership.

However, I am sure that members will understand why I want to pay particular tribute to Alex Salmond today. Without the guidance and support that Alex has given me over more than 20 years, it is unlikely that I would be standing here. I owe him a personal debt of gratitude, and it is important to me to put my thanks to him on the public record today.

Alex Salmond's place in history as one of Scotland's greatest leaders is secure, and rightly so. However, I have no doubt that he has a big contribution yet to make to politics in Scotland. I know that I will continue to seek his wise counsel, and—who knows?—from time to time he might seek mine too.

To become First Minister is special, and it is a big responsibility. To make history as the first woman First Minister is even more so. I am reminded of a quote that I once read from Florence Horsbrugh, who—as Ruth Davidson will know—was a Conservative member of Parliament for Dundee. In 1936, she became the first woman to reply to what was then the King's speech in the House of Commons. She said:

“If in these new and novel surroundings I acquit myself but poorly, when I sit down I shall at least have two thoughts for my consolation—it has never been done better by a woman before, and, whatever else may be said about me, in the future from henceforward I am historic.”

I can sympathise with the sentiment, though I hope not to need any such consolation.

Indeed, I much prefer this quote from the same speech:

“I ... think of this occasion as the opening of a gate into a new field of opportunity”.—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 3 November 1936; Vol 317, c 14.]

I hope that my election as First Minister does indeed help to open the gate to greater opportunity for all women. I hope that it sends a strong, positive message to girls and young women—indeed, to all women across our land. There should be no limit to your ambition or what you can achieve. If you are good enough and you work hard enough, the sky is the limit and no glass ceiling should ever stop you from achieving your dreams.

Presiding Officer, I hope that that is the message of my election, as indeed it was of yours, but it is what I do as First Minister that will matter more—much more—than the example that I have set simply by holding the office. Leading by example on equal representation and encouraging others to follow, addressing low pay and improving childcare—those are the obligations that I now carry and I am determined to discharge them on behalf of women across our country.

My niece, who is in the public gallery today with her brother and cousins, is eight years old. She does not yet know about the gender pay gap, underrepresentation or the barriers such as high childcare costs that make it so hard for so many women to work and pursue careers. My fervent hope is that she never will and that, by the time she is a young woman, she will have no need to know about any of those issues, because they will have been consigned to history. If, during my tenure as First Minister, I can play a part in making that so for my niece and for every other little girl in this country, I will be very happy indeed.

I am taking on the responsibilities of First Minister at an exciting time in our nation's history. All of us, regardless of party, have been inspired and challenged by the flourishing of democracy that we have witnessed during and since the referendum. Democratic politics in Scotland has never been more alive and the expectations that people have of their politicians and their Parliament have never been higher. There is a burning desire across our country to build a more prosperous, fairer and better Scotland.

People did not just vote yes for a better country. I know that those who voted no want a better country, too. I intend to lead a Government that delivers on those aspirations. My role as First Minister will be to help build a Scotland that all those who live and work here can be proud of—a nation both socially democratic and socially just; a Scotland confident in itself, proud of its successes and honest about its weaknesses; a Scotland of good government and civic empowerment; a Scotland vigorous and determined in its resolution to address poverty, support business, promote growth and tackle inequality. Those are the points against which my Government will set its compass. I earnestly believe that, in doing so, we

will reflect the wishes, hopes and desires—the dreams, even—of the Scottish people.

Of course we will have our differences across parties in the chamber as to the best way forward. We must never shy away from robust debate, but we should strive always to be constructive and respectful. I want all members to know that where we are on common ground—and I want to find as much of that as I can—they will find in me a willing and listening ally.

It will surprise nobody to hear that I will always argue the case for more powers—indeed, for the full powers of independence for this Parliament. I believe that the more we are able to do as a Parliament, the better we can serve the people who elect us. However, I will also—and always—do my utmost to govern well with the powers that we have now. My daily tasks will be to protect and improve our NHS, support our businesses at home and abroad, ensure that all children get the chance to fulfil their potential, and keep our communities safe from crime.

I intend to lead a Government with purpose, a Government that is bold, imaginative and adventurous. I know that there will be tough decisions to be made and I might not always get them right. It is not the case that all manner of things shall be well. I will face challenges, but I will strive to meet them positively and with fortitude. I know that I will be inspired and sustained each and every day by the potential of this country and of the people who live here.

I end with another quote, this time from the Earl of Seafield, the chancellor of Scotland who signed away Scotland's sovereign independence in 1707. As he did so, he lamented:

“there's ane end of ane auld sang”.

The song lay lost for 292 years until we reconvened the Parliament in 1999. This First Minister intends to make sure that we adorn that old song with new verses that tell of a modern and confident Scotland that is fit for purpose and fit for all of her people. Together, let us now get on with writing that story. [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, First Minister.

*Meeting closed at 15:36.*

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