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SPICe Briefing

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SPICe Bill Summaries - Session 6 - July 2025 to May 2026

SPICe Research

This briefing provides summaries of bills considered by the Scottish Parliament during the 6th Session of Parliament, between July 2025 and May 2026.



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Introduction

This briefing provides summaries of all bills considered by the Scottish Parliament during the 6th Session of Parliament, between July 2025 to the end of the Session in May 2026. These summaries are intended to be complementary to the information on the bills and laws section of the Parliament's website and have been prepared by SPICe subject specialists.

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 46

Introduced on: 27 March 2024

Introduced by: Liam McArthur MSP (Member's Bill)

Fell: 17 March 2026

Passage of the Bill

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1 and published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 30 April 2025. The Committee did not make a recommendation to Parliament on whether to accept the general principles of the Bill as it regarded the Bill as a matter of conscience.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee [reported on the Bill](#) on 20 September 2024. The Finance and Public Administration Committee also considered the Financial Memorandum and [wrote to the Convener of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on 28 January 2025](#).

The Stage 1 debate on the Bill took place on 13 May 2025 and the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill, with 70 votes in favour, 54 against and 1 abstention.

Stage 2 took place between 4 November and 25 November 2025.

Stage 3 amendments were considered over four sittings on 10-13 March 2026.

The Bill fell on 17 March 2026 with 57 votes for, 69 against and 1 abstention.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The policy memorandum to the Bill set out the following policy objective:

“ The aim of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill is to allow mentally competent terminally ill eligible adults in Scotland to voluntarily choose to be provided with assistance by health professionals to end their lives.”

The Bill sought to establish a lawful process for eligible adults to access assistance to end their lives.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill (as introduced) sought to allow eligible terminally ill adults in Scotland to lawfully request, and be provided with, assistance from health professionals to end their own life.

To be eligible to be provided with assistance to end their life, the Bill proposed that a person must:

- be terminally ill - this was defined as having an advanced and progressive disease, illness or condition which they could not recover from, and which was expected to cause their premature death,
- be aged 16 or over,
- have been resident in Scotland for at least 12 months and be registered with a GP practice in Scotland, and
- have sufficient capacity to make and understand the decision.

Two doctors would be required to assess a person as being eligible and both doctors would also need to be satisfied that a person was acting voluntarily, without being coerced or pressured.

If confirmed as eligible, a terminally ill adult could lawfully be provided with an approved substance by a health professional, and if they chose to end their own life, they would self-administer the substance. Assisting death outside of what was set out in the Bill would have remained unlawful.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1 and published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 30 April 2025. The Committee did not make a recommendation to Parliament on whether to accept the general principles of the Bill as it regarded this as a matter of conscience.

However, the Committee did highlight several areas it felt would require further consideration at stage 2. These included:

- The risk of a human rights based legal challenge resulting in extending eligibility over time.
- The extent to which the Bill struck the right balance between providing a right for terminally ill adults to access assisted dying, and the requirement to protect vulnerable groups.
- The possible need for further consultation on the age limit in the Bill.
- Greater consideration of the resource implications of medical professionals assessing capacity, as well as how to balance assessing capacity in a fair and non-discriminatory way, while also protecting vulnerable individuals.

In relation to other key issues, the Committee accepted the Member in Charge's rationale that clinical judgment, rather than a prognostic timescale, should prevail in the definition of terminal illness. The Committee also hoped the debate on assisted dying would act as a catalyst for further improvements to be made to the quality and accessibility of palliative care.

The Stage 1 debate on the Bill took place on 13 May 2025 and the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill, with 70 votes in favour, 54 against and 1 abstention.

Stage 2

Stage 2 amendments to the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill were considered by the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee over the course of four meetings between 4 November and 25 November 2025.

Prior to Stage 2 proceedings, [a Financial Resolution](#) for the Bill was also agreed by Parliament (on 30 October 2025). This was to allow for certain amendments with cost implications to be voted on.

A total of 298 amendments were lodged and considered at stage 2 and 74 were agreed to.

The main amendments agreed to included:

- Increasing the age of eligibility to 18.
- Clarification that disability or mental illness alone do not count as a terminal illness.
- Requiring doctors to discuss the person's reasons for seeking assisted dying and explain palliative/social care options.
- Prohibiting doctors from raising assisted dying with under-18s.
- Requiring referral to a psychiatrist if capacity is uncertain.
- Allowing doctors to prepare devices for self-administration.
- Requiring a doctor to be present during assistance.
- Requiring Ministers to set training rules, issue mandatory guidance, and regulate non-NHS settings.
- Requiring the substance used to be recorded on the death certificate.
- The conscientious objection clause was reframed as "no duty to participate," and protection from detriment was added.
- The creation of a new offence of advertising or soliciting assisted dying.
- Requiring complications to be reported.
- Requiring Ministers to review the impact on palliative care and hospices.

The main amendments not agreed to at stage 2 included:

- Adding a prognostic timescale of 3 months or 6 months to the definition of terminal illness.
- Raising the minimum age for eligibility to 25.
- Excluding people who are on social-care waiting lists from eligibility.
- Requiring a detailed palliative care plan before a person could access assisted dying.
- Requiring a formal anticipatory care plan as a precondition.
- Creation of an Assisted Dying Review Panel to decide eligibility.

- A ban on doctors from initiating discussions about assisted dying.
- Creation of a new administrative body to oversee the system.
- Proposal to extend the reflection period to 28 days.
- Requiring mandatory referrals to social workers or psychiatrists.
- Proposal for independent coercion assessments.
- Creation of a register of willing practitioners.
- Establishment of an Assisted Dying Training Authority - responsible for training standards, accreditation, ongoing education, and ensuring attention to equality, palliative alternatives, and UNCRRPD rights.

Stage 3

Stage 3 amendments to the Bill were considered by the Scottish Parliament over four sittings between 10-13 March 2026:

- [10 March 2026 Official Report](#)
- [11 March 2026 Official Report](#)
- [12 March 2026 Official Report](#)
- [13 March 20206 Official Report](#)

The main amendments agreed to at stage 3 included:

- The addition of a 6-month prognostic timescale to the definition of terminal illness.
- The insertion of a new section empowering Scottish Ministers to identify 'approved substances' and 'approved devices' via regulations, with consultation and Secretary of State approval required.
- The removal of the provisions around conscientious objection and the removal of the power for Ministers to regulate the training and qualifications of staff involved in assisted dying.
- Requiring the person to have been offered and have access to a fully costed palliative care plan.
- A requirement that both doctors should seek advice from a panel of experts appointed by Ministers. The panel would have included a palliative care doctor, a psychiatrist or expert in assessing capacity, and a social worker with experience in adult care and social support.
- The establishment of independent assessors for assessing coercion.
- The creation of a panel of experts to advise assessing doctors on assessing capacity, voluntariness, eligibility and absence of coercion.
- Requiring routine referral to a psychiatrist, rather than only when there are doubts about capacity.

This last point formed a significant focus of the debate at stage 3.

The Member in Charge of the Bill worked with the Scottish Government to remove these provisions on the basis that the Scottish Government would pursue a section 104 order with the UK Government. This was on account of concerns that they were beyond the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament.

Section 104 orders allow the King or a UK Government Minister to make secondary legislation considered “necessary or expedient in consequence of any provision made by or under an Act of the Scottish Parliament” or through Scottish secondary legislation. Section 104 orders are considered by the UK Parliament and are usually brought into force after the enactment of a Scottish Parliament Bill, but before its commencement. This is explained in more detail in a [SPICe blog](#).

The fact that the Section 104 order would not be in place until after the Bill was passed left some Members with concerns about the protections that would be in place for those with conscientious objections and the regulation of staff involved in assisted dying.

The main amendments not agreed to at stage 3 included:

The final debate and vote on the Bill (as amended at stage 3) was held on [17 March 2026](#). The Bill fell with 57 votes in favour, 69 against and 1 abstention.

Budget (Scotland) (No.5) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 80

Introduced on: 15 January 2026

Introduced by: Shona Robison MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 25 February 2026

Royal Assent: 31 March 2026

Passage of the Bill

The Budget (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 15 January 2026. The Stage 1 debate took place on 4 February 2025, the Finance and Public Administration Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2 on 17 February 2026, and the Bill was passed by Parliament on 25 February 2026.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Budget Bill is the final stage in the annual budget process and gives parliamentary authority for spending in Scotland for financial year 2026-27.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill authorises approximately £63.5 billion of cash expenditure by the Scottish Government and its associated bodies, other organisations whose core funding is centrally provided (e.g. local authorities and health boards), the Forestry Commissioners and the Food Standards Agency. It also authorises expenditure by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and Audit Scotland.

The Budget is underpinned by forecast tax revenues from the devolved taxes (Land and Buildings Transaction Tax, Scottish Landfill tax and Scottish Aggregates Tax) and non-savings non-dividend Income Tax, which is a shared tax with the UK. It also builds in forecast expenditure on social security. Tax and social security forecasts are produced by the Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Parliamentary consideration

At Stage 2, the Scottish Government brought forward amendments reflecting agreements with the Liberal Democrats. These amendments added a total of £30 million to the budget for 2026-27:

- An additional £20 million was provided to local government to support payment of the Real Living Wage for social care workers.
- The Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic portfolio received £5.53 million to extend the Investing in Communities Fund by one year.
- The Transport portfolio received a further £4.3 million to support a rail fare freeze

during 2026-27.

The Scottish Government said that these additional costs would be funded by a draw down from Scotwind. These amendments were passed by the Finance and Public Administration Committee.

At Stage 3, there were no further amendments, and so the Bill proceeded immediately to the final debate. Stage 3 of the Budget (Scotland) Bill passed with 66 in favour, 29 against and 24 abstentions. 10 MSPs did not vote.

The final Bill as passed can be [viewed on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 73

Introduced on: 5 June 2025

Introduced by: Shona Robison MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 17 March 2026

Royal Assent: 13 May 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Building Safety Levy \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 5 June 2025. The Finance and Public Administration Committee was the designated lead committee scrutinising the Bill.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill proposed introducing a new tax, called the Scottish Building Safety Levy (SBSL), to be charged on the construction or conversion of residential property developments, with some exceptions. This followed an amendment to the Scotland Act 1998 to include powers for a devolved tax to be charged in relation to certain steps in the building control process.

Money raised through this levy will be used to fund building safety expenditure. An equivalent tax is also being developed in England.

The Bill defined:

- which types of developments would be liable to pay the SBSL and those which would be exempt,
- when in the construction process the tax would be due,
- how the SBSL would be calculated,
- penalties for non-compliance and how appeals would be handled,
- reporting requirements on the operation of SBSL.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained 7 parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) provides a full overview of Bill provisions.

- Part 1 defined the levy as a tax charged on certain 'building control events' and gave responsibility to administer and collect the tax to Revenue Scotland.
- Part 2 defined key concepts such as the building control events and who is liable to pay.

- Part 3 set out that the rate of levy will be calculated on the basis of the square footage of the building. Scottish Ministers will define the precise rate in regulations. It also set out that the proceeds of the levy are to be used for the purposes of improving the safety of persons in or about buildings in Scotland.
- Part 4 concerned the administration of the levy, and set out how registration and accounting of the levy will be handled. This part also set out exemptions to the buildings in scope of the levy.
- Part 5 set out the penalties associated with non-payment of the levy.
- Part 6 made provisions for appealing against decisions of Revenue Scotland with respect to the levy.
- Part 7 contained final provisions, including requirements to produce reports on the operation of the Act should it be passed.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The [Finance and Public Administration Committee report on the Bill at Stage 1](#) was published on 11 December 2025. The Committee did not make a recommendation on whether Parliament should accept the General Principles of the Bill. The report highlighted concerns about the impact on the housing market and the compatibility with the housing emergency declared by the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government [responded to the Stage 1 report on 6 January 2026](#), and committed to:

- Publish an updated impact assessment alongside the publication of rates for the levy.
- Extend the exemption to the most remote areas of the mainland (Knoydart, Scoraig and Cape Wrath).
- Publish its definition of brownfield sites alongside indicative levy rates in June 2026.
- Amend the Bill at Stage 2 to require reports to be laid at least every three years after commencement.
- Consider broadening the exemption for historic buildings to include conversions.
- Publish indicative rates in June 2026, which the Scottish Government notes is nearly two years before the proposed introduction of the Scottish Building Safety Levy.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) was held on 8 January 2026 and the general principles of the Bill were agreed to (65 for, 54 against, 0 abstained).

Stage 2

[Stage 2 took place on Tuesday 10 February 2026](#), when the Finance and Public Administration Committee considered 66 amendments. The [Marshalled List](#) (a list of all the amendments that were lodged) and [Groupings](#) (how the amendments in the Marshalled List were grouped together for debate) are available on the Bill page of the Scottish Parliament website. The [Official Report of the Stage 2 meeting](#) is also available.

At Stage 2, 16 amendments to the bill were agreed. These were:

- **Amendment 3** specified that Scottish Ministers must consult with persons who “represent the interests of the residential property development sector” prior to changing the categories of buildings that are included in or exempt from the definition of a new residential unit.
- **Amendment 4** clarified the definition of the taxpayer of the levy, to remove uncertainty which might occur during the period when the property had been sold but the title not yet registered.
- **Amendment 5** made a similar modification to amendment 3, requiring consultation with representatives of the residential property development sector before regulations are made under Section 10 of the Bill.
- **Amendment 31** required that the Scottish Government introduce a relief of at least 50% for developments on brownfield sites.
- **Amendments 54 and 55** increased the minimum levy free allowance from 19 units to 29 units.
- **Amendment 56** provided for carrying forward of an unused levy-free allowance.
- **Amendment 7** required that Revenue Scotland cancel a person’s registration where that person has notified Revenue Scotland and Revenue Scotland is satisfied that the person has ceased their activity and will not carry out any activity that could give rise to a levy liability.
- **Amendment 8** provided a legal gateway to “support targeted, secure and proportionate information sharing”
- **Amendments 9 and 12** required that the Scottish Government report on the legislation every three years
- **Amendment 10** required reporting under the legislation, once enacted, to set out the work that has been fully or partly funded from the proceeds of the levy. **Amendment 11** allows these reports to refer to the annual progress report that is already required under the Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Act 2024.
- **Amendment 13** ensured that regulations that are made under Section 48 are subject to the affirmative procedure
- **Amendment 15** introduced a sunset clause that requires that the legislation will cease after a 15-year period. Ministers will be able to, through regulations, extend the period of operation. **Amendment 14** required that such regulations are subject to the affirmative procedure.

The [Bill as amended at Stage 2](#) can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website.

Stage 3

Stage 3 proceedings and the final debate on the Bill took place on [17 March 2026](#).

During Stage 2 proceedings, the Minister for Public Finance committed to work with members in two areas ahead of Stage 3. These are:

- Ensuring that the levy does not have a disproportionate impact on first time buyers.
- Ensuring that funding will only be used to fund cladding remediation, in a broad enough sense so that all aspects of relevant work can be funded by proceeds of the levy.

Two amendments were agreed at Stage 3, stating that Scottish Ministers 'may' create a relief for residential units sold to first time buyers, and to provide a more specific definition of how the proceeds of the levy can be used. Stage 3 of the Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill passed with 70 in favour, 56 against and 0 abstentions. 3 MSPs did not vote.

The final Bill as passed can be [viewed on the Scottish Parliament website](#) .

Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 74

Introduced on: 17 June 2025

Introduced by: Scottish Government

Passed: 19 March 2026

Royal Assent: 15 May 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 17 June 2025. The Education, Children and Young People (ECYP) Committee was the designated lead committee scrutinising the Bill.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The overall purpose of the Bill is to amend the law in relation to the children's care system. The Bill is part of the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations of the 2020 Independent Care Review, often referred to as [The Promise](#).

The Bill extends eligibility for aftercare support for young people leaving care prior to their 16th birthday, extends corporate parenting duties for certain publicly funded organisations and puts a duty on Scottish Ministers to issue guidance in relation to care experience.

The Bill also makes changes to planning arrangements for children's services, the operation of the children's hearings system, gives Scottish Ministers powers to introduce a register of foster carers, make regulations to improve financial transparency among non local authority residential care providers and cap excessive profits, and introduce a requirement for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) to be registered charities.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained three parts.

- [Part 1, Chapter 1](#) extends eligibility for aftercare support for young people leaving care prior to their 16th birthday. It also extends corporate parenting duties for certain publicly funded organisations to include those leaving care prior to their 16th birthday. Scottish Ministers must also issue guidance in relation to care experience to aid understanding.
- [Part 1, Chapter 2](#) gives Scottish Ministers powers to make regulations requiring non local authority residential care providers to supply financial and operational information in response to an initial information request, and to impose limits on excessive profits. It introduces a requirement for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) to be registered charities and gives Scottish Ministers powers to establish a

register of foster carers.

- [Part 1, Chapter 3](#) makes changes to the operation of the children's hearings system, including to the tests for referral to a hearing, the composition of panels, requirements around children's attendance at hearings, and terms of compulsory supervision orders (CSOs) and interim variation of CSOs.
- [Part 2](#) makes changes to planning arrangements for children's services, requiring any Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) covering an area to join local authorities and health boards on the list of bodies required to plan children's services.
- **Part 3** contains the final provisions for the Bill.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The [ECYP Committee Stage 1 Report on the Bill](#) was published on 17 December 2025.

The Committee report noted that the costs of aftercare provisions in the Bill were likely to be higher than set out in the Bill's Financial Memorandum. The [Finance and Public Administration \(FPA\) Committee](#) shared these concerns.

The report also highlighted Bill provisions on aftercare and a register of foster carers were not within the compatibility duty of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (UNCRC Act).

In relation to the children's hearings system changes proposed by the Bill, the Committee called for further clarity in certain areas including the circumstances in which a single member panel could be used, and the proposed new process for establishing grounds.

The Committee also highlighted the lack of definition of the term 'independent advocacy' within the Bill.

The Committee said the purpose of the Bill's proposals for Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) to join local authorities and health boards on the list of bodies required to plan children's services was unclear.

In [response to the Committee's report](#), the Minister for Children and Young People and the Promise, Natalie Don MSP, stated an independent review of the current legislative framework for the children's care system had been commissioned. This followed stakeholder evidence at Stage 1 describing the current legislative landscape as "cluttered" and complex".

The Scottish Government published a [supplementary Financial Memorandum for the Bill](#) on 6 March 2026. The supplementary Financial Memorandum sets out significant increases in the costs of the Bill. Further information on this is set out in the [SPICe briefing published prior to Stage 3](#).

The [Stage 1 debate](#) was held on 14 January 2026 and the general principles of the Bill were agreed to.

Stage 2

Consideration of Stage 2 took place during ECYP Committee meetings on [4 February](#), [11](#)

[February](#) and [18 February](#) 2026.

For further detail of Stage 2 amendments summarised below, please see the [SPICe Briefing on Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Bill: Consideration prior to Stage 3](#).

Amendments agreed at Stage 2 in relation to **Part 1** of the Bill include those noted below:

- introduction of a right to a needs-based assessment for kinship care assistance, with new duties placed on local authorities to provide kinship care assistance and information relating to kinship care assistance
- bringing aftercare and the register of foster carers provisions within the compatibility duty of the UNCRC Act
- provision of support for 16 and 17 year olds experiencing homelessness, care leavers transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and 18-20 year olds requiring accommodation support from Children's Services
- a definition of 'independent advocacy'
- further detail around advocacy services for care experienced people
- secure accommodation brought within the scope of section 8 of the Bill on strengthening financial transparency of residential care providers
- a statutory mechanism for annual uprating of allowances paid to foster and kinship carers
- processes and procedures for the Principal Reporter in areas including pre-hearing discussions and non-acceptance of grounds of a hearing
- changes to procedures around children's hearings, including in relation to pre-hearing panels; ensuring children's understanding of grounds; timescales for the court process around applying for or appealing decisions about the removal of relevant person status; and provision of information to children following referral.

Part 1A of the Bill was added to the Bill during Stage 2. It introduced [requirements around Family Group Decision Making \(FGDM\)](#). This is a process bringing together a child or young person's extended family network to make decisions about a child's welfare, aiming to reduce out of home care and strengthen family connections.

Amendments agreed at Stage 2 in relation to **Part 2** of the Bill included additional regulation-making powers for Scottish Ministers. These enable regulations to be made around national outcomes, priorities and activities related to children's services and wellbeing.

Part 2A was also added during Stage 2. It contains requirements for Scottish Ministers to review the Act within two years of it coming into force, and to publish a report detailing further action needed to fulfil The Promise by 2030.

Stage 3

Stage 3 proceedings took place on [18 March 2026](#), and the Stage 3 debate was held on [19 March 2026](#).

Amendments agreed in relation to **Part 1** of the Bill at Stage 3 include those noted below:

- further changes to aftercare assessment and eligibility
- further provisions relating to FGDM, including publication of national guidance and the right for children and families to request the service
- further amendment to provisions on corporate parenting guidance, including consideration of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and requirements for corporate parents report on how their actions contribute to delivery of The Promise
- further detail on the definition of independent advocacy and provision of independent care experienced advocacy services
- provisions on guidance on care experience to be laid in regulations rather than made in statutory guidance
- requirements for Scottish Ministers to conduct a review of the impact of delays to decisions on the permanent home of children
- further amendments to provisions on financial transparency measures for residential service providers
- further amendments setting out local authority reporting duties in relation to rates and payments paid by them to foster carers
- a requirement for Scottish Ministers to consult on and issue statutory guidance on restraint and seclusion
- a duty on Scottish Ministers to report annually to Parliament on deaths of looked-after children and those in continuing care or aftercare
- a duty on local authorities to promote peer support services throughout the adoption process
- provisions setting out further detail on arrangements relating to children's hearings, including measures to encourage the use of the same chairing member in relation to a child; a child's understanding of grounds; timescales on waiting times and the establishment of grounds before a sheriff; and connecting children with advocacy services
- power for Scottish Ministers to make regulations setting out that an arrested child can be taken to a place other than a police station.

Amendments agreed in relation to **Part 2** of the Bill at Stage 3 include those noted below:

- a requirement for children's services plans to include how services will be planned and delivered to support delivery of The Promise
- Part 2A (agreed at Stage 2) on review of the Act brought into Part 2 of the Bill. Review duties agreed at Stage 2 were also tidied up.

On 19 March 2026, the Bill was passed (111 for, 0 against, 0 abstained, 18 did not vote).

[The final Bill as passed](#) can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website.

Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number:	SP Bill 66
Introduced on:	30 April 2025
Introduced by:	Scottish Government
Passed:	17 February 2026
Royal Assent:	2 April 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Children \(Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (SP Bill 66) was introduced on 30 April 2025.

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee was designated as lead committee. The Bill completed Stage 1 on 25 November 2025, Stage 2 on 16 December 2025, and was passed by the Parliament at Stage 3 on 17 February 2026.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill has two main objectives, both of which relate to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)):

- The Bill seeks to ensure that pupils' views are taken into account when parents/carers exercise their right to withdraw their child from religious observance (RO) and religious and moral education (RME).
- The Bill proposes a further exemption to the compatibility duty under section 6 of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) (UNCRC Act). The new exemption would apply when Scottish legislation requires an incompatible action from a public authority.

Provisions of the Bill

This short Bill has two substantive parts.

Part 1 - Pupil's involvement in decision about withdrawal from religious instruction or religious observance

Currently, parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw children from RO and RME under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. However, there is non-statutory guidance which advises schools to consider a pupil's view if a parent seeks to withdraw them from RO/ RME.

Part 1 would amend the existing provision in the 1980 Act and provides that:

- Schools must notify the pupil of a parental withdrawal request, outline the pupil's right to object, and seek their views, taking account of their age and maturity.
- Pupils are presumed capable of forming a view "unless the contrary is shown".
- If the pupil objects to the parental withdrawal request, the school must discuss this with both pupil and parent. If the pupil still objects, then the school must not proceed with the withdrawal request.

Part 2 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024: circumstances where incompatible action or failure to act is not unlawful

Under the UNCRC Act, public authorities must act compatibly with UNCRC requirements - this is the 'compatibility duty'. The duty does not apply where the function is derived from an Act of the UK Parliament, and there is an exemption where a public authority is required or entitled to act incompatibly by words in UK derived legislation, or provisions inserted into Scottish legislation by UK legislation. These changes were added following a ruling by the Supreme Court on the UNCRC Bill – see the [Reconsideration Stage](#) of that Bill.

Part 2 adds an exemption allowing public authorities to act incompatibly with UNCRC requirements where compelled to by Acts of the Scottish Parliament.

The aims are to:

- reduce complexity for public authorities
- maintain coherence with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UNCRC Act
- ensure essential services can continue even where incompatibility arises.

Part 3 - covers regulation-making procedures, commencement and the short title of the Bill.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Committee heard serious concerns about Parts 1 and 2 of the Bill. Some stakeholders indicated support for the basic premise of the Bill, but this was still predicated on significant amendments being made.

Given these concerns, the Committee did not meet a consensus view on the general principles. A majority (four) supported the general principles, a minority (two) did not support the general principles, and one member was not in a position to make a recommendation on the general principles.

The issues under Part 1 were:

- the conflation between RO and RME – many stakeholders said that RO is about worship and RME is about education, and they should not be treated in the same way

- the potential for conflict between parents and children where views differ
- the lack of a right for a child to independently opt out of RO and RME
- lack of a minimum age for assessing a child's capacity to form a view
- compatibility with the UNCRC – some stakeholders told the Committee that if a public authority acts incompatibly with the UNCRC when implementing the new process created by Part 1, it would not be possible to challenge this through the courts. It was argued that the Bill should be amended to bring Part 1 into scope of the UNCRC Act.

The issues raised under Part 2 were:

- the lack of a clear justification for Part 2
- concerns that it is seeking a 'carve out' in the UNCRC Act.

The Scottish Parliament supported the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1. The result was: 66 for, 29 against, 21 abstained, 13 did not vote.

Stage 2

Amendments agreed under Part 1:

- RO separated from RME; right to withdraw from RME removed
- requirement for schools to provide written information to parents about the withdrawal process.

Amendments agreed under Part 2:

- introduction of a new notification process, triggered when the question of an exemption arises in legal proceedings. It requires the Lord Advocate, the Children's Commissioner and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to be notified, unless they are already parties to the case. The Lord Advocate and the commissioner bodies will then have the opportunity to intervene on the question.

For further detail see SPICe Briefing on [Children \(Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty\) \(Scotland\) Bill: Consideration prior to Stage 3.](#)

Stage 3

Amendments agreed under Part 1:

- regulation-making power for a pupil to have the right to request withdrawal from any RO in school
- statutory guidance duties - on the meaning of RO, handling withdrawal requests, assessing capacity, and supporting pupils
- a requirement for schools to "act impartially"
- a duty to provide alternative educational activity where a pupil has been withdrawn from RO

- annual report on the number of RO withdrawals.

Amendments agreed to under Part 2:

- listed authorities must notify Scottish Ministers, the Children's Commissioner and the SHRC when they are unable to comply with the compatibility duty.
- Scottish Ministers must report annually on the use of the compatibility duty exemption.

The Bill passed by division: 66 for, 51 against, 7 abstained, 5 did not vote.

Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number:	SP Bill 64
Introduced on:	2 April 2025
Introduced by:	Colin Smyth MSP (Member's Bill)
Fell:	8 April 2026 (Dissolution)

Passage of the Bill

The [Commissioner for Older People \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (SP Bill 64) was introduced on 2 April 2025.

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee was designated as lead committee. The Bill did not complete Stage 1.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The aim of the Bill was to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Scotland, to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of older people in Scotland.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill would establish a Commissioner for “older people” defined as those aged 60 years old and older.

The Commissioner would be appointed and accountable to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and be independent from the Scottish Government.

The Commissioner would have a range of functions, including raising awareness and reviewing laws, policies and practices. It would also have the power to investigate how well a service provider considers the rights of older people when making decisions or taking action about them.

Parliamentary consideration

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee ran a call for views between 26 June 2025 and 12 September 2025. The [48 responses have been published](#).

Stage 1 evidence was due to begin in the Autumn of 2025, timed to take account of the [findings](#) from the [SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee](#).

However, [the Committee discussed its work programme at its meeting on 9 September 2025](#) and agreed ‘not to commence any further scrutiny of the Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill at this time’.

The Bill did not complete Stage 1 before the end of the Session and so the Bill fell.

Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 62

Introduced on: 20 March 2025

Introduced by: Kate Forbes MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 10 February 2026

Royal Assent: 25 March 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Bill as introduced](#) aimed to ensure that local authorities and other parts of the public sector implement community wealth building across Scotland.

It did this by proposing statutory duties on Scottish Ministers and some public bodies to produce, implement and follow community wealth building statements, guidance and 'action plans'.

The Bill did not propose changing the law in any policy area related to community wealth building – its scope was focused on the strategic framework for community wealth building in Scotland.

Community wealth building is an approach to economic development. It seeks to use the economic power of 'anchor' institutions to try and stimulate and retain economic activity within a local economy across five 'pillars':

- Spending (using procurement policy to favour local businesses)
- Workforce (increasing wages, skills and flexible working)
- Land and property (ensuring anchor institutions' use of land and property benefits local communities, including transferring ownership to community groups)
- Inclusive ownership (encouraging social enterprises, employee-owned firms, and cooperatives)
- Finance (the [Policy Memorandum](#) describes this as "ensuring that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities, and businesses")

The Bill had three parts. The first part proposed a duty on Scottish Ministers to publish a community wealth building statement. The statement must set out what measures Scottish Ministers will take to:

“(a) reduce economic and wealth inequality between individuals and communities in and across Scotland, and (b) support economic growth in and across Scotland, by facilitating and supporting the generation, circulation and retention of wealth in local and regional economies.””

Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill as introduced, SP Bill 62, Session 6 (2025)

The second part of the Bill proposed a duty on local authorities and ‘relevant public bodies’ (which were listed on the face of the Bill) in their area to form ‘community wealth building partnerships’. These would be required to publish and, so far as reasonably practicable, implement a community wealth building action plan. Community wealth building partnerships could act jointly with other local authority areas.

Finally, the Bill also proposed a duty on Scottish Ministers to produce guidance in relation to both the production of action plans and the implementation of community wealth building principles more generally. The Bill listed certain public bodies that must have ‘due regard’ to this guidance when developing their own corporate plans and associated delivery strategies.

Parliamentary consideration

The Economy and Fair Work Committee was appointed lead committee for scrutiny. It published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 3 October 2025. This expressed support for the general principles of the Bill, whilst also setting out suggestions aimed at strengthening its proposals.

The Scottish Government provided a [written response](#) to the Stage 1 report on 20 November 2025.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 20 November 2025, following which the general principles of the Bill were agreed to without division.

Amendments agreed to at Stage 2 did not stipulate specific measures that community wealth building partnerships must include in their action plans. However, they did specify targets, indicators and measures that must be reported against, broadly against each of the five ‘pillars’ of community wealth building.

The Bill was also amended to require Scottish Ministers to publish a review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, as well as a “review of procurement to determine whether changes could be made to better support the intentions of this Act”.

More information on parliamentary consideration up to the end of Stage 2 is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill prior to Stage 3](#) (February 2026).

[Stage 3 proceedings](#) took place on 10 February 2026. Amendments agreed to at Stage 3 removed Stage 2 amendments to require Scottish Ministers to review community empowerment and procurement legislation and replaced this with a requirement to review “the extent to which the goals of the [community wealth building] statement ... are facilitated by existing policies and practices within the public sector, whether set out in an enactment or otherwise, in relation to procurement and community empowerment”.

The Stage 2 amendment that specified targets, indicators and measures that must be reported against in community wealth building action plans was itself amended at Stage 3.

Action plans will be required to set a target for the percentage of procurement contracts awarded to 'local economic operators'. They must also set indicators against which progress in delivering the actions plans can be measured. They "may" set targets and indicators across the five pillars of community wealth building.

After debate, the Bill was passed (For 103, Against 0, Abstentions 0).

The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 March 2026, becoming the [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#).

Contract (Formation and Remedies) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number:	SP Bill 76
Introduced on:	2 October 2025
Introduced by:	Angela Constance MSP (Government Bill)
Passed:	3 March 2026
Royal Assent:	14 April 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Contract \(Formation and Remedies\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (SP Bill 76) was introduced on 2 October 2025.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee was designated as lead committee.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The aim of the Bill was to implement recommendations for reforming and updating aspects of contract law which were made by Scotland's law reform body, the Scottish Law Commission.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill restated and reformed aspects of the law of formation of contract by creating a statutory statement of the law.

This included abolition of the “postal acceptance rule” (a rule that a contract is formed when an acceptance of an offer is put in the post, as opposed to being received).

In addition, the Bill also reformed certain aspects of the law of remedies for breach of contract (i.e. action the parties can take if there has been a breach of contract).

Further details can be found in [the SPICe Bill briefing](#) and on [the Parliament's webpage on the Bill](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee ran a call for views on the Bill which closed on 2 November 2025. [14 responses were published](#).

Stage 1 scrutiny took place in November and December 2025 and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 10 December 2025. The Committee agreed with the general principles of the Bill.

The Bill was considered at [Stage 2 by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 3 February 2026](#). It considered 17 amendments, all of which were lodged by the

Member in charge and all of which were agreed to without division. The amendments made were primarily in response to comments made by stakeholders in Stage 1 scrutiny. [A letter to the Convener of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, Stuart McMillan MSP, from the Minister for Victims and Community Safety, Siobhian Brown MSP, dated 26 January 2026 summarises the scope of the amendments.](#)

One further technical amendment was considered and agreed to without division at [Stage 3 on 3 March 2026](#). The Bill was passed following [the Stage 3 debate on 3 March 2026](#) with no Member voting against or abstaining.

Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 52

Introduced on: 24 September 2024

Introduced by: Angela Constance MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 7 October 2025

Royal Assent: 19 November 2025

Purpose of the Bill

The main provisions of the [Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews \(Scotland\) Bill](#) were set out in two parts.

Part 1 of the Bill sought to make permanent some of the temporary justice measures set out in the Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Act 2022. These included ones:

- enabling virtual attendance at criminal courts
- removing geographical limits on which criminal courts can deal with the initial stages of a case where the accused appears from police custody.

Part 1 also set out new provisions aimed at supporting digital innovation in the criminal justice system (e.g. in relation to the use of digital productions instead of physical evidence in court proceedings).

Part 2 of the Bill set out a statutory framework for a national system of reviews into homicides or suicides connected to domestic abuse. The purpose of such reviews would be to identify what lessons can be learned following a death where domestic abuse is known or suspected, with the aim of helping to prevent future abuse and deaths.

Further information on these provisions is set out in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) (November 2024).

Parliamentary consideration

The Criminal Justice Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 11 March 2025. This expressed support for the general principles of the Bill, whilst also setting out recommendations aimed at strengthening its proposals.

The Scottish Government provided a [written response](#) to the Stage 1 report on 28 March 2025.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 1 April 2025, following which the general principles of the Bill were agreed to without division.

Amendments agreed to at Stage 2 included:

- Part 1 of the Bill – adding new provisions relating to evidence from police body-worn video footage
- Part 2 of the Bill – requiring a connection between a reviewable death and the domestic abuse of a partner or ex-partner.

More information on parliamentary consideration up to the end of Stage 2 is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill prior to Stage 3](#) (September 2025).

Stage 3 proceedings (final consideration) took place on [7 October 2025](#). Amendments agreed to at Stage 3 included:

- Part 1 of the Bill – requiring the Scottish Government to review and report on the operation of the provisions in the Bill enabling virtual attendance at criminal courts
- Part 2 of the Bill – a range of Scottish Government amendments seeking to strengthen the provisions in the Bill.

After debate, [the Bill was passed](#) (for 115, against 0, abstentions 0).

The Bill received Royal Assent on 19 November 2025, becoming the [Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#).

Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 71

Introduced on: 2 June 2025

Introduced by: Jim Fairlie MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 24 March 2026

Royal Assent: 18 May 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Crofting and Scottish Land Court Bill](#) was introduced to Parliament on 2 June 2025 by Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity.

The [Policy Memorandum](#), [Explanatory notes](#) and [Financial Memorandum](#) were published alongside the Bill.

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee was designated as the lead committee for scrutiny of the Bill.

The Bill completed Stage 1 on [13 January 2026](#). Stage 2 was completed on [11 February 2026](#); and the Bill was [passed in Parliament on 24 March 2026](#). The Bill received Royal Assent on 18 May 2026.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained many provisions that were mainly aimed at streamlining and improving the crofting system.

The [Scottish Government stated that the reforms](#), "aim to strengthen crofting in seven key respects: crofting communities, enforcement of crofters' duties, crofting commission powers, common grazings, the crofting register, electronic communications and simplifications and clarifications to crofting law".

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained two parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced provides a full overview of the bill](#). Provisions included: Part 1 of the Bill proposed various changes to the law on crofting. It proposed amendments to the [Crofters \(Scotland\) Act 1993](#) and the [Crofting Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). It proposed changes to the enforcement of crofters' duties, the powers of the Crofting Commission, common grazings, and the Crofting Register.

Part 2 proposed merging the Scottish Land Court and Lands Tribunal for Scotland.

It set out the transfer to the Scottish Land Court of:

- the jurisdiction and functions of the Lands Tribunal

- any proceedings or matters in the process of being heard or determined by the Tribunal, its staff, property, rights, liabilities and obligations.

It also made proposals for the Court's constitution, jurisdiction and powers.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee led scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee published its report on [1 October 2025](#). The Finance and Public Administration (FPA) Committee scrutinised the Bill's accompanying Financial Memorandum.

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee published its [Stage 1 report on the Bill](#) on 19 December 2025. The Committee supported the general principles of the Bill and the Scottish Government's approach of addressing specific issues. However, it also noted the broad support that it had heard for a more fundamental and structural review of crofting policy and law in modern Scotland. The Scottish Government responded to this in a [letter on the 9 January 2026](#) within which they expressed support for the Committee's position regarding the need for a more fundamental and structural review. They also addressed some concerns raised by the Committee during stage 1, for example they committed to bringing forward an amendment at stage 2 to address stakeholder concerns about the ability of community organisations to purchase croft land and use it for crofting and housing purposes given the changes the Bill was proposing.

[The Stage 1 debate was held on 12 January 2026](#). The general principles of the Bill were agreed to (119 for, 0 against, 0 abstained, 10 did not vote).

Stage 2

Over 200 amendments were lodged at Stage 2. [The amendments were considered](#) by the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee over two meetings.

The Bill as amended at [Stage 2 is available on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Much of the debate at Stage 2 focused on strengthening the enforcement of crofters' duties and clarifying permissible uses of croft land, especially environmental use, as well as improving regulatory transparency and common grazings management.

The following provides a broad overview of some of the main amendments. [A SPICe briefing provides further detail on Stage 2 considerations of the Bill](#).

• Crofting reform

Stage 2 amendments significantly strengthened enforcement of crofters' duties. Scottish Government and member-led amendments expanded the Crofting Commission's functions to include enforcement, introduced a power for Ministers to create a civil monetary penalties regime and clarified procedures for investigating and responding to suspected breaches. Changes were intended to provide a more proportionate and workable enforcement system while maintaining safeguards such as appeal rights to the Land Court.

• Environmental and other purposeful uses of crofts

Amendments agreed clarified and tightened the definition of “environmental use” of croft land, ensuring it requires active land management and cannot be used as a substitute for abandonment. Energy generation was explicitly excluded from environmental use, while the Crofting Commission’s role in approving environmental use applications was reinforced. Ministers were given powers to amend the list of recognised environmental uses by regulation.

- Registration and regulatory processes

Stage 2 amendments introduced a general requirement that crofts must be registered before most regulatory applications can be made, creating a single, consistent process across the system. Changes also modernised registration fees, extended notification periods for landlords, and strengthened the ability to correct administrative errors in the Crofting Register.

- Common grazings

Amendments improved regulation of common grazings by aligning enforcement mechanisms with those applying to individual crofts and strengthening oversight of grazings committees. The Bill was amended to clarify how forestry, environmental projects and energy developments are treated within common grazings, and to ensure Commission oversight rather than reliance on landowner consent alone.

- Assignations, acquisitions and owner-occupied crofts

Changes approved at Stage 2 aimed to improve fairness and transparency in family assignations and prevent early profit-taking following Commission lets. Amendments also simplified procedures for creating owner-occupied crofts, introduced opportunities for community objections, and adjusted the ten-year restriction on assignation and acquisition in exceptional circumstances.

- Review of crofting legislation

Although amendments requiring a statutory post-legislative review were not agreed at Stage 2, Ministers gave commitments to further discussion ahead of Stage 3 on wider reform of crofting law and future legislative change.

- Scottish Land Court reform

Part 2 amendments supported the merger of the Scottish Land Court and the Lands Tribunal for Scotland. Changes modernised appointment, review and appeal arrangements, ensured specialist expertise in judicial appointments and updated jurisdiction to reflect recent land reform legislation. Further discussion was signalled on monitoring the effectiveness of the merger.

Stage 3

Stage 3 took place over two days on [19](#) and [24 March 2026](#) with 59 amendments lodged.

Many amendments agreed to at stage 3 were important technical fixes. Several amendments improved consistency and flexibility in how crofting duties are applied. For example, owner-occupier crofters are now clearly allowed to meet their obligations not only personally but with family or hired labour, bringing them in line with tenant crofters. Other changes closed loopholes, such as preventing crofters from using applications to delay

enforcement, as well as standardising appeal procedures.

Amendments also included measures to improve transparency and accountability, particularly in relation to landowners and regulatory processes. Landowners must now justify any conditions they impose, and timelines for certain decisions have been adjusted to allow more thorough consideration of complex cases. In addition, a number of technical amendments improve the operation of the Crofting Register and ensure legal consistency across the bill, particularly in areas such as decrofting and apportionments.

A key amendment enacted a provision that requires a formal review of crofting legislation within a few years, creating a pathway for more comprehensive future changes. Alongside this, new review mechanisms for the Land Court reforms aim to monitor how the system develops and consider expanding its role, potentially into environmental law. Overall, the changes modernise the framework, strengthen community influence, and support environmental use, while leaving some bigger issues such as financial benefits from natural capital still to be resolved in further legislation.

[The Bill was agreed to](#) (119 for, 0 against, 0 abstained, 10 did not vote).

Desecration of War Memorials (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 68

Introduced on: 14 May 2025

Introduced by: Meghan Gallacher MSP (Member's Bill)

Bill withdrawn: 3 February 2026 (during Stage 1)

Purpose of the Bill

The [Desecration of War Memorials \(Scotland\) Bill](#) sought to create a specific criminal offence where a person, without reasonable excuse, wilfully or recklessly destroys, damages or desecrates a war memorial.

Existing criminal offences which may be used to prosecute such cases include the statutory offence of vandalism and the common law offence of malicious mischief. These offences are not restricted to particular types of property.

The Bill's Policy Memorandum argued that the use of existing criminal offences, which are also used where other types of property are vandalised, fails to consider the heightened impact of a war memorial being damaged or desecrated.

Further information is set out in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 8 January 2026. In the conclusions, the Committee commented that:

“We note that an alternative way of the Member in Charge achieving her main aim of greater protection for Scotland's war memorials would be through the creation of a statutory aggravation to existing charges such as vandalism, malicious mischief or breach of the peace. The suggestion made to us by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service was that not only would such an approach oblige the courts to take the aggravation into account but that the range of current sentencing options would remain intact.

Therefore, the Committee invites the Member in Charge to consider engaging with the Scottish Government on the merits of creating a statutory aggravation, concerning the desecration of war memorials.”

On 3 February 2026, at the start of the [Stage 1 debate](#) on the Bill, Meghan Gallacher MSP indicated that she would be withdrawing the Bill. As the Bill had not completed Stage 1, the Scottish Parliament's agreement to it being withdrawn was not required.

In explaining her reason for withdrawing the Bill, she highlighted the point made by the Committee about considering a statutory aggravation as a possible alternative approach.

She confirmed that she had discussed this possibility with the Scottish Government and expressed her hope that future legislation on this issue would reduce the number of attacks on war memorials.

Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 75

Introduced on: 30 September 2025

Introduced by: Kate Forbes MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 5 March 2026

Royal Assent: 16 April 2026

Passage of the Bill

The Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 30 September 2025.

Stage 1 scrutiny evidence sessions took place from 26 November to 17 December 2025. The [Stage 1 debate took place on 22 January 2026](#).

[Stage 2 scrutiny took place on 18 February 2026](#).

The [Stage 3 debate took place on 5 March 2026](#). The Bill was passed unanimously.

More information about the parliamentary passage of the Bill is available on the [Scottish Parliament's Digital Assets \(Scotland\) Bill webpage](#). This includes the [Bill as introduced](#) and its accompanying documents.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill aims to clarify that certain digital assets are recognised as things which can be owned in Scots law. The Scottish Government hopes that increased legal certainty will benefit both businesses and individuals in Scotland who use digital assets.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill sets out:

- a definition for the digital assets to which the Bill would apply – these must arise from an electronic system which makes them “rivalrous” and exist independently from the legal system.
- that such digital assets would be treated as incorporeal moveable property generally for the purposes of Scots law, but as corporeal moveable property for the purposes of ownership and transfer
- how ownership in relation to these digital assets would be established and transferred.

The term rivalrous means that the use or consumption of the asset by one person limits its use or consumption by another. In order to achieve this, the Bill would require an electronic system to create an “immutable record”.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Economy and Fair Work Committee was designated the lead committee for Stage 1 scrutiny. It published its [Stage 1 Report on 15 January 2026](#). The [Scottish Government gave its full response on 30 January 2026](#). This was after the Stage 1 debate had taken place. It therefore issued a [holding response on 21 January 2026](#).

Key issues for Stage 1 scrutiny were:

- whether the definition of digital assets in the Bill was flexible enough to be future-proofed while not capturing assets which would be better regulated in other ways
- how guidance and expert advice could be provided to ensure that the Bill would be understood by those working with digital assets, and the law would be supported to develop in a coherent way
- the role of the concepts of control and exclusive control (as defined in the Bill) in practice.

Stage 2

Only the Scottish Government brought forward amendments at Stage 2. The key change was to remove electronic trade documents (such as bills of lading) from the scope of the Bill.

Stage 3

Scottish Government amendments to remove the concept of “exclusive control” from the Bill were agreed to at Stage 3. It argued that control on its own, as defined in the Bill, was a more suitable proxy for possession of corporeal moveable property.

Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 43

Introduced on: 8 February 2024

Introduced by: Jeremy Balfour MSP (Member's Bill)

Bill withdrawn: 30 September 2025 (during Stage 1)

Passage of the Bill

The [Disability Commissioner \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (SP Bill 43) was introduced on 8 February 2024.

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee was designated as lead committee. The Bill was withdrawn on 30 September 2025 and did not complete Stage 1.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The aim of the Bill was to establish a Disability Commissioner for Scotland, whose primary purpose would be to promote and safeguard the rights of disabled people. The intention was to provide a champion for disabled people, to help address barriers experienced, such as in education, housing and employment.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill would establish a Commissioner for disabled people who meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010.

The Commissioner would be appointed and accountable to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and be independent from the Scottish Government.

The Commissioner would have general functions to review the law, policy and practice relating to the rights of disabled people, promote best practice and undertake investigations.

Parliamentary consideration

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee ran a call for views between 28 March 2024 and 17 May 2024 and published [110 responses](#).

The Committee heard formal evidence from:

- Commissions and Commissioners on 4 June 2024
- disability organisations on 11 June 2024 and 18 June 2024
- Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP, on 3 September 2024
- Jeremy Balfour MSP, Member in charge of the Bill, on 17 September.

The Committee also held informal engagement sessions with disabled people on 10 September 2024.

For context, it is important to note that:

- The written evidence and majority of oral evidence was taken before the Scottish Government announced its [Programme for Government 2024-2025](#) on 4 September 2024. This meant that witnesses were unaware that the anticipated Human Rights Bill for Scotland, and the proposed Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (Scotland) Bill (LDAN Bill), would be delayed.
- All evidence, except the session with the Member in charge on 17 September 2024, was heard before the Finance and Public Administration Committee published its report on [Scotland's Commissioner Landscape: A Strategic Approach](#) on 16 September 2024. In this report the Finance and Public Administration Committee called for a “moratorium on creating any new SPCB supported bodies” until a review was carried out.

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee published its [Stage 1 Report on the Bill](#) on 10 December 2024. The Committee said:

- disabled people continue to face significant barriers and are not realising their rights and that action is needed to address this; they commended the Member-in-charge for bringing the Bill forward
- there is strong support from many disabled people and organisations for establishing a Disability Commissioner
- concerns were expressed on:
 - duplication or overlap with existing bodies
 - limited investigatory and enforcement powers
 - the financial costs of a new body and whether resources could be better spent on existing structures
- feelings of frustration among disabled people increased because of the delays to the LDAN Bill and Human Rights Bill.

The Committee noted [Parliament's agreement](#) on 31 October 2024 to establish a dedicated committee to conduct a “root and branch” review of the commissioner landscape and to impose a moratorium on new bodies or expanding the remit of existing bodies.

Given this context, the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee made no recommendation on the general principles of the Bill. Instead, it invited the Parliament to hold a full and focused debate on the Bill to help inform the root and branch review.

However, it also recommended that, regardless of the Bill's outcome, the Scottish Government should take action to address barriers faced by disabled people.

On 19 June 2025, the SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee [published its report](#). It was of the view that SPCB supported bodies should not be expanded to include new advocacy bodies and that any new bodies must satisfy the criteria set out in the report. On 18 September 2025, the [Parliament agreed](#) with the conclusions and

recommendations of the report.

On 19 September 2025 the [Scottish Government announced additional funding](#) as part of the Disability Equality Plan, following dialogue with Jeremy Balfour MSP.

On 24 September 2025, the [Edinburgh Evening News](#) reported that Jeremy Balfour MSP was “deeply disappointed” at the outcome of the commissioner landscape review.

The Bill was withdrawn on 30 September 2025.

Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 58

Introduced on: 17 February 2025

Introduced by: Maurice Golden MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: 16 December 2025

Royal Assent: 10 February 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The [Dog Theft \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced as the Member believed a standalone offence of dog theft was required to: (a) address low levels of prosecution; and (b) enable the impact of dog theft to be fully taken into account.

The main provisions of the Bill as introduced were set out in five sections:

- section 1 – setting out a standalone offence of dog theft
- section 2 – setting out an aggravation to the offence of dog theft where the dog is an assistance dog
- section 3 (removed from the Bill at Stage 2) – allowing a victim of dog theft to make a victim statement about the effect of the crime on them to the court
- section 4 – requiring the Scottish Ministers to report annually on the operation of the legislation
- section 5 (removed from the Bill at Stage 2) – requiring the Scottish Ministers to review the legislation five years after it comes into force.
- replacing the label 'assistance dog' with the broader expression 'helper dog', and enabling Scottish Ministers to extend the definition of a helper dog through regulations
- changing the annual reporting requirement on the Scottish Ministers to a one-off reporting requirement after three years and reducing the information to be included in this report to only cover the numbers of cases, prosecutions and convictions.

Further information is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) .

Parliamentary consideration

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 2 July 2025. It noted that, notwithstanding the Committee's recommendations set out in the report, and concerns about the effectiveness of a standalone offence, the Committee supported the general principles of the Bill.

Maurice Golden MSP provided a [written response to the Committee's Stage 1 report](#) on 4 August 2025, and the Scottish Government provided a [written response to the report](#) on 29

September 2025.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 2 October 2025. Following the debate, the [general principles of the Bill were unanimously agreed to](#).

[Stage 2](#) included the agreement of amendments to remove sections 3 (victim statements) and 5 (review of operation of the Act) of the Bill.

Further amendments included:

More information on parliamentary consideration up to the end of Stage 2 is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill prior to Stage 3](#).

[Stage 3 proceedings](#) took place on 16 December 2025. After the [Stage 3 debate](#), the [Bill was passed](#) (For 119, Against 2, Abstentions 0).

The Bill received Royal Assent on 10 February 2026, becoming the [Dog Theft \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#).

Ecocide (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 70

Introduced on: 29 May 2025

Introduced by: Monica Lennon MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: Did not pass (fell at Stage 2)

Royal Assent: N/A

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill sought to create a new criminal offence of ecocide, with maximum penalties of up to twenty years imprisonment and an unlimited fine. It proposed defining ecocide as where a person intentionally or recklessly causes severe environmental harm (severe if it has serious adverse effects and is either widespread or long-term). The Bill provided that individuals and organisations could be liable, and set out circumstances where 'responsible individuals' of organisations could also be liable.

The Member in charge's policy objectives in introducing the Bill were: 1) to ensure that offences which meet the definition of ecocide were treated as crimes 2) to act as a deterrent and 3) to maintain alignment with developments at EU level.

More detail on the Bill as introduced is [set out in the SPICe Bill briefing](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The lead committee was the Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee, which [published its Stage 1 report on 23 January 2026](#). Whilst the Committee, by majority, supported the principle of treating the most serious forms of environmental harm seriously and felt there was a strong case for changing the law, it did not consider there was time remaining in Session 6 to deal with Stages 2 and 3, [citing issues it considered required further consideration](#).

The Member in charge (and the Scottish Government) continued to support the Bill and, whilst time pressures were [discussed in the Stage 1 debate on 5 February 2026](#), the Parliament [voted to agree the general principles of the Bill](#).

The Bill was then referred back to the NZET Committee for Stage 2 consideration. The Committee [wrote to the Presiding Officer on 18 February 2026](#) setting out that, by majority, it did not consider there was space in its work programme for this to happen. The [Presiding Officer responded](#) that an alternative route for Stage 2 would not be pursued (effectively meaning the Bill could not progress any further).

The NZET Committee went on to recommend [in its legacy report](#) that a successor Committee may wish to reflect on its Stage 1 report on the Bill, and "explore early in the Session whether the Scottish Government plans to take action in this area, the current Scottish Government having supported the Member's Bill in this Session".

The Bill fell on 8 April 2026 at Stage 2.

European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 70C

Introduced on: 05 May 2020

Introduced by: Andy Wightman MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: 23 March 2021

Supreme Court judgment: 6 October 2021

Approved following reconsideration: 3 March 2026

Royal assent: 15 April 2026

Passage of the Bill

[The European Charter of Local Self-Government \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) ("ECLSG Bill") was [a Member's Bill introduced by Andy Wightman MSP](#) on 5 May 2020, which intended to incorporate an international treaty (The European Charter of Local Self-Government), to which the UK is a signatory, into Scots law.

Following Stage 1 scrutiny by the Local Government and Communities Committee, the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill on 4 February 2021, and the Bill was passed by the Parliament on 23 March 2021.

The Bill was subsequently [referred to the Supreme Court by the Attorney General and the Advocate General for Scotland under section 33\(1\) of the Scotland Act](#). The Supreme Court handed down its judgment on 06 October 2021. Mark Ruskell MSP was designated as the additional member in charge of the Bill for Session 6, as Andy Wightman was not returned as an MSP in Session 6.

Mark Ruskell MSP moved the motion for Parliament to reconsider the Bill on 4 February 2026. This motion was agreed to.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

[The European Charter of Local Self-Government](#) (1985) commits signatories to a set of basic rules which seek to uphold the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities through legislation and, where applicable, constitution. It also sets out that the charter applies to councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage. As a Council of Europe instrument, the Charter does not have a binding effect or a monitoring mechanism.

Part I of the Charter outlines that public responsibilities should be carried out by the authorities closest to the citizens, and that management of particular aspects of public life

be controlled at a local authority level. Parts II and III of the Charter set out the responsibilities of each signatory, as well as the legal framework for ratification, territory, denunciation and notification. Article 12 of the Charter decrees that each signatory to the Charter undertakes to consider itself bound by at least 20 of the 30 paragraphs in Part 1 of the Charter, and states that at least ten of these should be taken from a specific set of paragraphs.

Parliamentary consideration of the Bill

The [Local Government and Communities Committee](#) was assigned as the lead committee for the Bill, and [published its Stage 1 report](#) on 22 January 2021.

At the [Stage 1 debate on 4 February 2021](#) the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill.

[Stage 2 took place on 24 February 2021](#), with 19 technical amendments agreed without division and [the Bill as amended published that day](#).

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee [published a report on 18 March 2022](#) on the Bill after Stage 2 amendments.

Stage 3 proceedings (final consideration) [took place on 23 March 2021](#), and [the Bill as amended was passed unanimously](#).

Supreme Court ruling

The Supreme Court [handed down its judgment on 06 October 2021](#). It concluded that sections 4(1A) and 5(1) of the Bill would be outside of the Parliament's legislative competence. The Supreme Court Summary of the judgment states:

“Finally, the Court decides that two provisions of the ECLSG Bill would modify section 28(7) of the Scotland Act and, for that reason, fall outside the competence of the Scottish Parliament. The first is section 4(1A) of the ECLSG Bill, which provides that Acts of the UK Parliament “must be read and given effect in a way which is compatible with” the ECLSG [83]. This would sometimes require the courts to modify the meaning and effect of Acts of Parliament, producing results which the UK Parliament did not intend. Accordingly, for the same reasons as section 19(2)(a)(ii) of the UNCRC Bill, section 4(1A) of the ECLSG Bill would be outside the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament [84]. The second provision of the ECLSG Bill is section 5(1), which would confer on the courts the power to declare that an Act of the UK Parliament is incompatible with the ECLSG [87]. For the same reasons as section 21(5)(b)(ii) of the UNCRC Bill, section 5(1) of the ECLSG Bill would affect the power of the UK Parliament to legislate for Scotland. It would therefore be outside the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament [88]-[89].”

Section 36(4)(a) of the Scotland Act 1998 provides that reconsideration of a Bill can take place if the Supreme Court has decided that the Bill (or any part of the Bill) would be outside the legislative competence of the Parliament. The procedures for the reconsideration of a Bill passed (and then returned to Parliament) are outlined in Rule 9.9 of the Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament.

Parliamentary consideration after reintroduction

Mark Ruskell MSP was designated as the additional member in charge of the Bill for

Session 6. He moved the motion for Parliament to reconsider the Bill on 4 February 2026. This motion was agreed to.

The then Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP [announced on 24 May 2022](#) that the Scottish Government would support Mark Ruskell MSP, as designated Member, to take forward the ECLSG Bill to a Reconsideration Stage in the Parliament.

On 15 January 2026, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Shona Robison MSP, [wrote to Mark Ruskell MSP detailing proposed amendments to the Bill](#). This letter was copied to the [Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee](#). At its meeting on [27 January 2026](#), the Committee agreed to write to stakeholders for their views on the proposed amendments, and the Committee considered correspondence received [at its meeting on 24 February 2026](#).

In the meantime, Secretary for Finance and Local Government of Scotland Shona Robison MSP [lodged amendments](#) to the Bill on 5 February 2026.

[The final debate on the Bill](#) took place on 3 March 2026, and the Bill as amended was approved unanimously, meaning that it completed the reconsideration stage and was resubmitted for Royal Assent.

Freedom of Information Reform (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 72

Introduced on: 02 June 2025

Introduced by: Katy Clark MSP (Member's Bill)

Fell: 09 April 2026

Passage of the Bill

Katy Clark MSP introduced the [Freedom of Information Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) on 2 June 2025. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee was the lead committee for the Bill.

A Stage 1 debate took place on 17 February 2026 at which the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill.

The Bill did not complete its parliamentary stages and fell at dissolution of Session 6 of the Scottish Parliament on 9 April 2026.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill aimed to amend the [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#) (FOISA), an Act of the Scottish Parliament granting individuals the right to access recorded information held by Scottish public authorities.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 was previously the subject of post-legislative scrutiny carried out by the Session 5 Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee. The aim of the Bill, as set out in the [Policy Memorandum](#), was to fulfil the [outstanding recommendations from the Session 5 Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee](#) and ensure the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 remained effective in a contemporary context.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill comprised 23 sections and included provisions to:

- introduce a presumption in favour of disclosure when exemptions are being considered by public authorities
- require Scottish Ministers to consider recommendations from the Scottish Information Commissioner on designating new bodies under FOISA, and give the Scottish Parliament power to designate organisations delivering public functions or services by resolution
- extend FOISA to publicly owned companies that are jointly owned by the Scottish Ministers and another public authority

- make changes to the requirements for reports on the “section 5 powers” and require the Scottish Parliament to debate any section 5 report
- clarify that freedom of information requests can include an electronic address for correspondence
- pause, rather than reset, the 20-working-day response clock when seeking clarification
- repeal the publication scheme duty
- create a new exemption for information provided to the Scottish Information Commissioner for the purpose of investigating appeals
- provide the Scottish Information Commissioner with the power to require information from individuals acting on behalf of public authorities
- enable the Scottish Information Commissioner to investigate appeals on its handling of information requests made to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner
- allow the Scottish Information Commissioner to issue enforcement notices where there is non-compliance with FOISA codes of practice
- remove the First Minister’s “veto” power
- allow the Scottish Information Commissioner to refer cases of failure to comply with the timescales in decision notices to the Court of Session
- introduce a proactive publication duty supported by a code of practice
- require all public authorities to designate a Freedom of Information Officer
- allow the Scottish Information Commissioner to disclose certain information to Audit Scotland
- create an offence where information is destroyed with intent to prevent disclosure, even if no information request has been made
- extend the time limit for prosecuting the offence of deliberately destroying or concealing records.

Parliamentary consideration

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee held a [call for views on the Bill](#) and later published the SPICe [summary of views](#) ahead of its Stage 1 consideration of the Bill. The Committee received oral evidence from stakeholders over four meetings.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee considered the powers to make subordinate legislation in the Bill and published its [report](#) on 30 October 2025. The Finance and Public Administration Committee also [considered the Financial Memorandum to the Bill](#).

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 26 January 2026. It did not recommend that the Parliament agreed to the general

principles of the Bill.

A Stage 1 debate took place on 17 February 2026 to consider and decide on the general principles of the Bill. Katy Clark MSP moved motion [S6M-20815](#):

“ “That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Freedom of Information Reform (Scotland) Bill”.”

Sue Webber MSP moved amendment [S6M-20815.1](#):

“ “As an amendment to motion S6M-20815 in the name of Katy Clark (Freedom of Information Reform (Scotland) Bill), insert at end ", but, in so doing, highlights the time pressure in the current parliamentary session and the views in the stage 1 report, including that Freedom of Information reform should be addressed in the next parliamentary session." ”

After debate, the amendment was agreed to. The motion, as amended, was agreed to by division. Accordingly, the Parliament resolved:

“ “That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Freedom of Information Reform (Scotland) Bill, but, in so doing, highlights the time pressure in the current parliamentary session and the views in the stage 1 report, including that Freedom of Information reform should be addressed in the next parliamentary session”.”

Katy Clark MSP formally [responded to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's report](#) on 2 March 2026.

The Parliament agreed to a [financial resolution](#) on 5 March 2026.

The Bill did not complete its parliamentary stages ahead of dissolution of Session 6 of the Scottish Parliament, and as such, fell on 9 April 2026.

Greyhound Racing (Offences) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 65

Introduced on: 23 April 2025

Introduced by: Mark Ruskell MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: 18 March 2026

Royal Assent: 14 May 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill proposed banning greyhound racing in Scotland on oval tracks, making it an offence for:

- A person who owns or is responsible for a greyhound, to "knowingly cause" that greyhound to run on a racetrack or "knowingly permit" another person to do so.
- A person who owns or is responsible for operating a racetrack, to "knowingly cause or permit" another person to cause a greyhound to run on that racetrack.

The Policy Memorandum set out that the "there is an inherent, evidence-based, risk of injury or fatality" of racing greyhounds and existing animal welfare measures have not sufficiently protected them. More detail [can be found in the SPICe Bill briefing](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The Rural Affairs and Islands (RAI) Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1 and [published its report on 22 January 2026](#). It [supported the general principles of the Bill](#) by a majority. Prior to that, the RAI Committee held an inquiry on greyhound racing, brought about by [a petition](#), and [published an interim report in 2024](#) with a range of recommendations on greyhound welfare. The general principles of the Bill were agreed following the [Stage 1 debate on 29 January 2026](#).

A small number of amendments were made to the [Bill at Stage 2](#):

- The words "in Scotland" were added to the definition of racetrack, to provide clarity that an offence could not arise where a dog is taken from Scotland to race in another country. An amendment was also agreed so that the delegated power for Scottish Ministers to change the definition of 'racetrack' "may only be exercised for the purpose of preventing harm to greyhounds".
- Provisions on post-conviction court powers e.g. to remove greyhounds from a person's care were removed and replaced with similar provisions already in the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.
- Time bars for proceedings were removed.

- An amendment was agreed providing that the main provisions of the Bill would commence on a date set in regulations. The [Scottish Government said](#) this would allow the ban to be brought in “at an appropriate time, when all the resources, processes and procedures are in place”.

There were no Stage 3 amendments.

Housing (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 36

Introduced on: 26 March 2024

Introduced by: Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 30 September 2025

Royal Assent: 6 November 2025

Passage of the Bill

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (the Bill) was introduced to Parliament on 26 March 2024 by Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities.

The [Policy Memorandum](#), [Explanatory Notes](#) and [Financial Memorandum](#) were published alongside the Bill.

The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee was designated as the lead committee for scrutiny of the Bill for Parts 1-4 of the Bill.

The [Social Justice and Social Security Committee](#) was designated as a secondary Committee on the Bill and took evidence on Parts 5 (homelessness prevention) and Part 6 (other matters and fuel poverty) of the Bill.

The Bill completed [Stage 1 on 28 November 2024](#). [Stage 2 was completed on 3 June 2025](#); and the Bill was [passed in Parliament on 30 September 2025](#). Following Royal Assent, it [became an Act on 6 November 2025](#).

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained many provisions that were mainly related to private rented tenancies and homelessness prevention measures.

The [Scottish Government stated that the package of reforms](#), "will help ensure people have a safe, secure, and affordable place to live ... while contributing to the ambition to end homelessness in Scotland."

Provisions of the Bill

The bill as introduced contained five parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced provides a full overview of the bill](#). Provisions included:

Part 1 relates to rent paid by private tenants. Provisions include duties on local authorities to assess and report on rent conditions in their area and powers for Scottish Ministers to introduce rent control areas and place limits on rent increases for tenants with a private residential tenancy.

Part 2 of the Bill deals with evictions. It places a duty on the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland

and the courts to consider whether to delay when an eviction can be carried out. It also changes how damages for unlawful eviction are calculated.

Part 3 introduces new rights for private and social housing tenants to request to keep a pet and for private housing tenants to make changes to the property they are renting.

Part 4 makes changes to other matters affecting tenants, including:

- allowing unclaimed deposits to be paid to the Scottish Ministers or into another fund so that they can be used to provide support to private tenants across Scotland
- allowing a single joint tenant to end a joint tenancy
- giving Scottish Ministers the power to convert assured tenancies into private residential tenancies.

Part 5 of the Bill relates to homelessness prevention and would introduce an 'ask and act duty' on relevant public bodies, with the aim of making homelessness prevention a shared responsibility across the public sector, and extend the time by which someone would be considered as threatened with homelessness. It also requires social landlords to have a policy which sets out how they will support tenants who are at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse.

Part 6 deals with other housing matters including: changing the way mobile home pitch fees are presumed to be calculated; changing the reporting and consultation requirements in the Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee led scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1.

[The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee published its report on 4 September 2024](#). The Finance and Public Administration (FPA) Committee scrutinised the Bill's accompanying Financial Memorandum.

The [Social Justice and Social Security Committee published its report on Part 5 and Part 6](#) of the Bill on 20 September 2024. It supported the provisions, recognising the legislation presents an opportunity to move away from crisis management towards prevention. However, it was also concerned by the perceived lack of detail in the Bill and noted the importance of training and guidance.

The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee published its [Stage 1 report on the Bill on 14 November 2024](#).

The Committee supported the general principles of the Bill. In relation to rent control, the committee heard evidence that the principle and mechanics of using it are complex and contentious. The Scottish Government had announced its decision to lodge amendments at Stage 2 [to specify the formula for the rent cap to be applied in rent control areas on the face of the Bill in October 2024](#) to provide greater certainty. The Committee noted that further scrutiny would be required. The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee took evidence on the broad proposals on [28 January 2025](#).

The [Stage 1 debate was held on 28 November 2024](#). The Bill was agreed to on division (for 83, against 31, 4 abstained, 11 did not vote).

Stage 2

Many amendments, nearly 700, were lodged at Stage 2. [The amendments were considered](#) by the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and the Social Justice and Social Security Committee over 10 meetings.

The Bill as amended at [Stage 2 is available on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Much of the debate at Stage 2 centred around the rent control area provisions in Part 1 of the bill and whether the right balance between the rights of tenants and the rights of landlords had been achieved.

The following provides a broad overview of some of the main amendments. A [SPICe briefing provides further detail on Stage 2 considerations of the Bill](#).

- **Rent control areas**

Scottish Government amendments would set out the formula for the rent cap to be applied in rent control areas on the face of the Bill as Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1% up to a maximum of 6%.

Non-Government amendments, not supported by the Scottish Government, included those that would change the approval process for a rent control area designation and include student tenancies into various provisions in Part 1 of the Bill.

Other amendments approved included those designed to strengthen the data collection powers in the Bill.

- **Rent increases outwith a rent control area**

Scottish Government amendments would extend the time which a tenant with a private residential tenancy has to request a rent officer adjudication on a rent increase notice from 21 to 30 days.

- **Prevention of Homelessness**

Amendments agreed to include those that would provide more detail on the 'ask and act duty', a right to review for certain local authority decisions and to facilitate information sharing and coordination amongst relevant bodies in the discharge of their 'ask and act duty'. The list of relevant bodies to whom the 'ask and act duty' applies was extended to effectively include Social Security Scotland.

- **Other tenancy matters**

Scottish Government amendments agreed to sought to provide more certainty on the potential content of secondary regulations relating to keeping pets and personalisation of rented homes. Other amendments would reduce the qualifying period for succession to a Scottish Secure Tenancy and a Private Residential Tenancy (PRT) by a qualifying occupier from 12 months to 6 months.

- **Other matters**

A range of other amendments on areas not included in the bill as introduced were also agreed to. These included:

Taxation and local government finance: Non-Government amendments, supported by the Scottish Government, would require Scottish Ministers to review the impact of joint and several liability for council tax arrears on domestic abuse victims and survivors and to make changes to council tax legislation on unoccupied dwellings.

Housing quality: Scottish Government amendments would enable regulations for an "Awaab's law" for social rented housing in Scotland so that social landlords must deal with certain disrepair issues, including dampness, in a timely manner.

Mobile Homes: A non-Government amendment, not supported by the Scottish Government, would transfer the functions for the resolution of disputes between park home owners and residents from the sheriff court to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.

Scottish Housing Regulator: A non-Government amendment, supported by the Scottish Government, would create an independent appeals process for decisions by the Scottish Housing Regulator to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.

Stage 2 was completed on 23 April 2024. Following this, an [amended version of the Bill was published](#).

Stage 3

Stage 3 took place over three days on [23](#), [24](#) and [30 September 2025](#) with around 400 amendments lodged.

Some of the non-Government amendments agreed at Stage 2 but not supported by the Scottish Government were removed. For example, the application of the rent control area measures to student tenancies was removed.

There had been debate about the extent to which certain types of properties should be exempt from rent control areas. [In early September, the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Màiri McAllan MSP](#), had set out the Government's position that future secondary legislation would exempt certain types of property from rent control areas.

[The Bill was agreed to by division](#) (for 89, against 28, abstentions 0).

Leases (Automatic Continuation etc.) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 54

Introduced on: 11 December 2024

Introduced by: Angela Constance MSP (Government Bill)

Bill withdrawn: 10 September 2025 (during Stage 1)

Passage of the Bill

The [Leases \(Automatic Continuation etc.\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (SP Bill 54) was introduced on 11 December 2024.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee was designated as lead committee. The Bill was withdrawn by the Scottish Government at Stage 1.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The aim of the Bill was to implement recommendations for reforming and updating aspects of the law on commercial leases which were made by Scotland's law reform body, the Scottish Law Commission.

Provisions of the Bill

The main provision in the Bill was reform of the law on “tacit relocation” and replacement of the existing rules with a new statutory code. Tacit relocation is a legal principle which means that a commercial lease automatically continues on the same terms (“relocates”) after its termination date.

Further details on the provisions in the Bill can be found in [the SPICe Bill briefing](#) and on [the Parliament's webpage on the Bill](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee ran a call for views on the Bill. [30 responses were published](#). [SPICe published an analysis of the call for views](#).

Stage 1 scrutiny took place in April and May 2025 and the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 23 June 2025. The Committee's Stage 1 report highlighted to the Scottish Government a wide range of concerns raised by some stakeholders during scrutiny of the Bill and asked that these be fully addressed in the Scottish Government's response to the report. The Stage 1 Report stated that:

“As a consequence, the Committee is not making a recommendation on the General Principles at this time and will reserve its position until it has received the Scottish Government's response.”

The Bill was ultimately withdrawn on 10 September 2025 by the Scottish Government.

[In a letter to the Convener of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, Stuart McMillan MSP, dated 10 September](#), the Minister for Victims and Community Safety, Siobhian Brown MSP, explained the reasoning for the withdrawal of the Bill. She stated that:

“ “While many stakeholders welcomed the Bill, a minority questioned the need for it and the scope of the reform proposed. This is reflected in the evidence the Committee heard at Stage 1 where the S1 report states “the Committee highlights to the Scottish Government the wide range of concerns – some fundamental – raised by some stakeholders during the course of the Committee’s scrutiny of the Bill” and as a consequence, the Committee did not make a recommendation on the General Principles in its report. While Scottish Law Commission Bills have, in the past, generally proceeded on the basis of a clear consensus over the question of whether the law should be reformed, it is clear to me that, regrettably, there is no such consensus among Committee Members on this Bill and it appears unlikely that such consensus will be reached during the amending stages if the Bill were to proceed and changes to the Bill has the potential to make it markedly different from what the SLC envisaged. Accordingly, I have taken the decision to withdraw the Bill at this stage. This is not a reflection at all on the excellent work undertaken by the Commission, of which I know we are all very appreciative.””

Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 44

Introduced on: 13 March 2024

Introduced by: Mairi Gougeon MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 5 November 2025

Royal Assent: 16 December 2025

Passage of the Bill

The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill (the Bill) was introduced to Parliament on 13 March 2024 by Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands.

The [Policy Memorandum](#), [Explanatory Notes](#), [Financial Memorandum](#) and [Delegated Powers Memorandum](#) were published alongside the Bill.

The [Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee](#) was designated as the lead committee.

The Bill [completed Stage 1 on 26 March 2025](#), with [Stage 2 completing on 24 June 2025](#); the Bill [was passed in Parliament on 5 November 2025](#). Following Royal Assent, it [became an Act on 16 December 2025](#).

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill was in two main parts. As introduced, Part 1 made provision in relation to large landholdings, and Part 2 dealt with certain types of leases of land. A third, and minor part, made final provisions.

The [Scottish Government stated that the package of reforms would bring about](#) “a Scotland with a strong and dynamic relationship between its land and people, where all land contributes to a modern, sustainable and successful country, supports a just transition to net zero, and where rights and responsibilities in relation to land and its natural capital are fully recognised and fulfilled”.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained three parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) provides a full overview.

Part 1 related to large landholdings (defined as those in excess of 3,000ha and 1,000ha). Provisions included a power for Ministers to impose, by regulation, obligations on owners of large landholdings (>3,000ha) to produce, consult on with the local community, and then publish a land management plan for their holding. In the event of a transfer of all or part of a >1,000ha holding, a modified pre-emptive [right to buy for a local community](#) and/or lotting (i.e. compulsory fragmentation) was provided for. To oversee and advise on this, a new Land and Communities Commissioner was proposed within the

Part 2 related to leasing land. It required the Scottish Government to produce a model lease for environmental purposes, updated the legislation governing small landholdings, and made detailed provision in relation to agricultural tenancies in a number of areas, including resumption, right to buy, assignation, compensation, and diversification, among other things.

Part 3 made final provisions, including specifying the procedures that regulation-making powers are subject to, and commencement dates.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee led scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1.

The [Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee published its report on 17 January 2025](#). The Finance and Public Administration Committee scrutinised the Bill's accompanying Financial Memorandum, [writing to the lead Committee on 28 October 2024](#).

The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee published its [Stage 1 Report on the Bill on 19 March 2025](#).

A majority of the Committee supported the general principles of the Bill, with two out of seven Members dissenting.

The [Stage 1 debate was held on 26 March 2025](#). The Bill was agreed to on division (for 90, against 30, 0 abstained, 9 did not vote)

Stage 2

More than 500 amendments were considered by the lead Committee at Stage 2, over five meetings.

The Bill, [as amended at Stage 2, is available on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

In relation to Part 1, much of the debate at Stage 2 related to the definition of a large landholding and whether the right balance had been struck between the rights of land-owners and communities.

In relation to Part 2, the debate at Stage 2 related to the details around tenancy reforms. The area of greatest debate was around the changes to 'resumption', the process for, and conditions under which, a landlord can take back land prior to the end of the lease. Commenting on the Bill as introduced in response to [the Committee's call for views](#), many stakeholders broadly agreed that the compensation provided to tenants should be reviewed. However, some stakeholders also disputed or queried the approach in the Bill, in relation to:

- the valuation methodology chosen
- the decision to apply the provisions to both 1991 Act and 2003 Act tenancies, rather than solely to 1991 Act tenancies¹ⁱ

i A '1991 Act tenancy' is an agricultural tenancy governed by the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991; a '2003 Act tenancy', also known as a 'limited duration tenancy', is an agricultural tenancy governed by the Agricultural Holdings

- uncertainties and differing views around the decision to include compensation to tenants based on the capital value of the land
- the omission of provisions to modernise compensation in cases where tenants have been served an 'incontestable notice to quit' – where the tenancy is terminated because the landlord has received planning permission for developments other than agriculture – and potentially loses all or part of their holding.

In relation to Part 1, a [SPICe Blog provides further detail on Stage 2 consideration of Part 1 of the Bill](#), with significant changes as follows:

- Lowering the land area threshold to which Land Management Plan provisions apply from 3,000ha to 1,000ha.
- Requiring the Land Management Plan to have regard to relevant local place plans.
- Increasing the maximum fine for non-compliance with Land Management Plan provisions from £5,000 to £40,000.
- Clarifying that land split by a road, railway or similar, should be treated as sharing a common border.
- Extending the number of bodies who can report an alleged breach of Land Management Plan obligations.
- Increasing timescales for communities to register an interest in relevant land.
- Requiring Ministers to publish a statement giving reasons why a decision to let a large land holding would be in the public interest.

In relation to Part 2, the significant changes and points of discussion were as follows:

- Further provisions consolidating and modernising the law around small landholdings, including the process around creating new small landholdings.
- Amendments around a tenant's right to buy, including providing that a tenant does not need to serve notice within 28 days of their intention to exercise their right to buy in a situation where the landlord makes moves to sell but does not notify the tenant. In this scenario, the tenant must give notice and then may begin the process of exercising their right to buy, but the timescale is removed. However, Scottish Ministers were also conferred a power at Stage 2 to specify a timescale within which the tenant must notify the landlord of their intentions in the future.
- Minor procedural amendments in relation to assignation and succession, and updated descriptions of the types of people who the existing tenant can assign or appoint to succeed the tenancy in a will.
- [Probing amendments](#) were tabled which proposed changes to the resumption provisions, including disapplying the changes to 2003 Act tenancies (in other words, providing that resumption changes would only apply to 1991 Act tenancies). These were either withdrawn or not agreed, but the Cabinet Secretary agreed to further discussions in relation to 2003 Act tenancies.

- Amendments were made at Stage 2 to the resumption provisions, including extending the timescale in which a tenant can terminate a tenancy following notice of resumption by the landlord (from 28 days to 6 weeks), and providing that the parties must agree on a valuer with the Tenant Farming Commissioner stepping in to appoint a valuer if parties cannot agree on one between themselves (the Bill as introduced had the Tenant Farming Commissioner appoint a valuer in every case).
- The Bill as introduced included lists of improvements for which tenants are entitled to compensation at the end of a tenancy, organised based on whether they require notice, consent, or neither from the landlord, as well as a fourth list of indicative improvements which are considered to facilitate or enhance sustainable or regenerative agricultural production. This fourth list was removed, and the included points were incorporated in the other three lists instead depending on the level of landlord involvement required in carrying out the improvement. As a consequence, amendments were also made requiring the Land Court to consider the extent to which an improvement will improve efficiency of the holding and/or contribute to sustainable and regenerative agriculture when referred a decision around a disputed improvement. Amendments were also made to the process for notifying a landlord or obtaining their consent to carry out improvements.

Stage 3

Stage 3 took place over four days on [28](#) and [29 October](#) and [4](#) and [5 November 2025](#).

In relation to Part 1, some of the amendments that were agreed to include:

- A requirement for Ministers to issue guidance about how Land Management Plan obligations are to be met.
- Requiring all Land Management Plans to be published on a single website.
- Further provisions to expand the functions of the Land Commissioners.
- Requiring the Land Commissioners to review and then report on the impact and effectiveness of Part 1 within 5 years of commencement, and for Ministers to respond to this within one year.

In relation to Part 2, some of the amendments that were agreed to include:

- A requirement to produce a model lease for ‘hutting’ (the practice of building small, non-permanent, shelters to support recreational activities) on public land within three years of Royal Assent (by 16 December 2028).
- Changes to small landholdings provisions which had the effect of adding alternative dispute resolution and clarifying security of tenure for small landholders, ensuring that Tenant Farming Commissioner codes of practice and reports into alleged breaches are taken into account when using arbitration to resolve disputes, modifying and adding consultation requirements to regulation-making powers in relation to small landholdings, and other consequential changes to small landholders provisions, such as expanding the jurisdiction of the land court to include matters in the schedule relating to small landholders.
- Adding and modifying consultation requirements to regulation-making powers in relation to tenants’ right to buy.

- Conferring two additional time-limited powers on Scottish Ministers (both powers are only available to the Scottish Ministers for five years):
 - In response to concerns around applying resumption provisions to 2003 Act tenancies (also referred to as 'limited duration' tenancies), an amendment was agreed giving Scottish Ministers the power to "change or clarify the method for determining" new types of compensation provided for by the Act in relation to 2003 Act tenancies.
 - A second power allows Scottish Ministers to create an additional entitlement for compensation for a tenant who has received a 'notice to quit' due to the landlord obtaining planning permission for non-agricultural developments. Scottish Ministers may also change or clarify the method for determining that additional compensation. This second power was created in response to concerns raised at Stage 1 that, with the amendments made by the Bill to compensation for resumption, the compensation available to tenants who have been served a notice to quit may become out of balance.
- Adding resumption and incontestable notices to quit to the illustrative list of matters on which the Tenant Farming Commissioner may produce codes of practice.
- Clarifying how matters should be taken into account by the Scottish Land Court when determining fair rent for a holding in relation to fixed equipment or improvements paid for by the tenant or landlord (or both).

The Bill was agreed to by division (85 for, 28 against, 9 abstained, 7 did not vote).

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 59

Introduced on: 19 February 2025

Introduced by: Mairi Gougeon MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 29 January 2026

Royal Assent: 12 March 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill was introduced alongside supporting documents on 19 February 2025. As introduced, the Bill included four main Parts which sought to:

- Set out a legislative framework for the setting and monitoring of statutory targets for improving biodiversity (**Part 1**);
- Provide Scottish Ministers with a power to modify or restate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation and the Habitats Regulations (**Part 2**);
- Make changes to legislation underpinning National Parks, in particular to amend their statutory aims and give Scottish Ministers a power to set up a fixed penalty notice regime in relation to National Park byelaws (**Part 3**);
- Reform deer management legislation – extensively amending [the Deer \(Scotland\) Act 1996](#). (**Part 4**).

A key driver for the Bill was to establish a framework for nature targets as part of the wider framework for tackling the nature crisis. The Bill was also used as a vehicle to implement changes in other areas following consultations or reviews including [the 2020 Deer Working Group report](#), resulting in a Bill wide in scope.

The Policy Memorandum set out that "Taken together, the provisions in this Bill aim to support the work already being undertaken by land managers, farmers, nature agencies, charities and the stewards of Scotland's land, to restore and protect the natural environment on which everyone in Scotland depends."

More detail on the Bill as introduced [can be found in the SPICe Bill briefing](#).

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The Rural Affairs and Islands Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1 and [published its report on 30 September 2025](#), which supported the general principles of the Bill alongside a range of recommendations. The [Stage 1 debate took place on 30 October 2025](#) and the general principles of the Bill [were agreed](#).

Stage 2

The Bill as amended at Stage 2 [was posted on the Scottish Parliament website on 11 December 2025](#). Numerous amendments were agreed across each Part:

- **Nature targets:** Several amendments were agreed to clarify and develop the governance framework for statutory nature targets (to be set in secondary legislation), including the addition of a consultation requirement. A delegated power was also added to the Bill enabling Scottish Ministers to introduce regulations setting out a different approach to [statutory biodiversity reporting by public bodies](#) (at the same time, removing the requirement for all public bodies to produce reports, with a view to developing a targeted approach).
- **Part 2 was removed:** Part 2 of the Bill as introduced would have given Scottish Ministers the power to, by regulations, amend, revoke, repeal or restate EIA legislation and the Habitats Regulations. It was contentious during Stage 1; stakeholders raised concerns about the need for such a broad power and how it could be used in practice. Alternative amendments were debated which sought to apply 'safeguards' to the power, but Members ultimately agreed, by division, to remove Part 2.
- **National Parks:** Amendments were agreed clarifying language around the statutory aims of National Parks and the enforcement powers available in relation to fixed penalty notices. A requirement was also added for Scottish Ministers to publish a National Parks policy statement every ten years.
- **Deer management:** Several amendments were agreed including statutory timescales for deer control agreements, a power for Scottish Ministers to define "shotgun" in regulations for the purposes of deer management, and changes to how deer control may be authorised on common grazings. A post-legislative review clause was also added which requires a 10-year review of the operation of the deer management modifications.
- Requiring Scottish Ministers to introduce building regulations to require the installation of **swift nest boxes** in certain circumstances (with clarifying changes made at Stage 3).
- Requiring Scottish Ministers to consider climate mitigation and adaptation if considering designating a **Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas**.
- Requiring NatureScot to publish reports on **gull populations** (at Stage 3 the proposed reporting period was extended to five-yearly).
- Requiring Scottish Ministers to introduce regulations to set out that **clean scallop shells** should not be treated as waste or animal by-products to support their sustainable use (amended at Stage 3 to require guidance only) .
- Changing how the boundary of a licensed area for **grouse shooting** is to be determined under [the Wildlife Management and Muirburn \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#), allowing NatureScot to propose a different area to that set out in the application. (At Stage 3 this was amended further to require that if NatureScot makes such a 'counter-proposal', it must consider that reasonable and appropriate and provide reasons).
- Clarifying the procedure to be used in the Scottish Parliament for approving a Scottish Government **Improvement Plan** (produced in response to an Improvement Report by Environmental Standards Scotland).

Further amendments were made not relating to the above Parts:

More detail on Stage 2 proceedings is set out in [the SPICe Stage 3 briefing](#).

Stage 3

A broad range of substantive amendments were also agreed at Stage 3.

In relation to the framework for setting **nature targets**, amendments were agreed:

- Modifying [the public sector biodiversity duty](#) to ensure public bodies consider how they can support delivery of statutory nature targets.
- To require that nature targets are set with a view to supporting delivery of relevant international agreements.
- To require Scottish Ministers to include information on funding mechanisms in statements accompanying nature targets.
- To require that any review body for nature targets (if changed from Environmental Standards Scotland in future) must be independent of Government.

On **National Parks**, amendments were agreed:

- Adding two statutory aims for National Parks relating to encouraging sustainable agriculture and promoting sustainable economic growth.
- Requiring Scottish Ministers, before making a National Park proposal, to seek expert advice on specified matters and have regard to it.
- Allowing Scottish Ministers greater flexibility [to appoint as reporter](#) for a National Park proposal, any “person or body” with relevant expertise (previous law required a reporter to be NatureScot or another public body).

On **deer management**, amendments were agreed:

- Adding the purpose “to ensure the effective and humane control of deer” to the list of general aims and purposes of NatureScot in relation to deer.
- Requiring any [statutory code of practice on deer management](#) to set out the circumstances in which NatureScot may intervene in deer management.
- Adding a consultation requirement where NatureScot is carrying out a review of compliance with the code of practice on deer management.
- Requiring NatureScot to publish the outcome of any [review of a deer control agreement](#) “as soon as reasonably practicable” after completing the review.
- Adding a right to request action by NatureScot where deer are not being managed, with associated procedures and information requirements (and a power for Scottish Ministers to amend information requirements by regulations).
- Requiring NatureScot, if notifying land owners or occupiers about a control scheme, to also notify other owners or occupiers likely to be significantly affected

- Requiring Scottish Ministers to prepare a national deer management and venison plan within 5 years.
- Where a person [is authorised to access land to take a census of deer](#), requiring that information to be shared with the owner within 3 months.
- Requiring a copy of the 10-year review of changes to deer management (a requirement added at Stage 2) to also be sent to the relevant subject committee in the Scottish Parliament.
- Expanding the deer management code of practice to include guidance on how statutory rights to control deer (including damage-prevention powers) should be exercised in practice.
- Making it an offence to knowingly cause or permit deer to be killed without proper authorisation or outside the legal conditions for damage prevention, with a defence where a person reasonably believed the activity was lawful.
- Giving Scottish Ministers powers to regulate how rights to kill or take deer to prevent damage are exercised, including imposing procedural requirements, disapplying rights for non-compliance, and creating offences and penalties.
- Extending liability for unlawful deer killing beyond the person carrying it out to those who authorise or permit it.

New sections were added to the Bill at Stage 3 relating to **fishing offences**:

- Increasing maximum penalties under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003, and allowing penalties to be determined on a per-fish basis, aiming to recognise harm caused by salmon poaching.
- Requiring Scottish Ministers to consult and report on the effectiveness of penalties in sea fisheries legislation within 2 years.

Various substantive amendments were made to Part 5 (Miscellaneous and General):

- Giving NatureScot the power to license the killing or taking of mountain hares for the purpose of **falconry** under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The background to this relates to [a petition to the Scottish Parliament](#) in session 6.
- Giving local authorities the power to make byelaws under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 in connection with the **prevention of wildfires**. A delegated power was also added for Scottish Ministers to make regulations for the issuing of fixed penalty notices for breaching such a byelaw.
- A delegated power was added for Scottish Ministers to make regulations about the protection of “**designated wetlands**” i.e. [Ramsar sites](#) (a response to concerns that Ramsar designations do not have a statutory basis, although [Scottish Government guidance exists](#) on their expected level of protection).
- A delegated power was added for Scottish Ministers to introduce regulations on **sustainable forest management**, implementation of the forestry strategy, and mechanisms for requiring compliance with aspects of [the UK Forestry Standard](#).
- The offence of **unauthorised felling** in the Forestry and Land Management

(Scotland) Act 2018 was modified to include circumstances where someone has knowingly caused or permitted another person to unlawfully fell a tree.

- Two substantive changes were made to the framework for **muirburn licensing** in [the Wildlife Management and Muirburn \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#). Firstly, a new licensable purpose – for training as part of an approved course - was added to section 13. Secondly, the condition in the 2025 Act that NatureScot must be satisfied when granting a licence for muirburn on peatland, that “no other method of vegetation control is practicable” was removed. The Scottish Government said that “current evidence on the impacts of alternatives such as cutting or grazing on peatlands is inconclusive”, so alternative methods cannot always be assumed to be preferable.

Finally, while a power to amend the Habitats Regulations and EIA legislation (Part 2 of the Bill as introduced) was not re-introduced, the need for guidance on implementation of the Habitats Regulations was discussed, and [the Scottish Government committed to](#) “establishing a short-life working group in 2026, which will be formed of independent experts with appropriate ecological expertise”, to “consider where we need new guidance on the habitats regulations” and to “provide advice to ministers on where that guidance will help us to achieve our biodiversity ambitions”. The Government also committed to consult on that guidance.

Final debate and vote

The final debate and vote on whether to pass the Bill [took place on 29 January 2026](#). In the final vote, 90 MSPs voted for the Bill, 26 against and no abstentions. The motion to pass the Bill was therefore agreed.

Non-Domestic Rates (Liability for Unoccupied Properties) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 78

Introduced on: 24 November 2025

Introduced by: Shona Robison MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 27 November 2025

Royal Assent: 7 January 2026

Purpose of the Bill

This was an emergency bill introduced to amend legislation passed in 2020. Scottish Government lawyers identified a serious technical flaw in the [Non-Domestic Rates \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) meaning that some of the original legislation's policy intentions were not accurately reflected in law.

As a result of this error, owners of up to 34,000 unoccupied properties may have been paying Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) on their properties for three years when, legally, they didn't have to. This overpayment could have amounted to anything between £300 million and £350 million in total between April 2023 and September 2025.

The issue was first identified by Scottish Government officials after a routine enquiry from a local authority. This prompted a re-examination of the legislation and identification of the error. Given the possibility of an avalanche of repayment claims when the error came to light, the Government introduced this emergency bill to correct the mistake and apply the correction retrospectively.

More specifically, this emergency bill reversed a repeal made in error by the [Non-Domestic Rates \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) which accidentally removed the legal right of local authorities to charge **owners** of unoccupied properties non-domestic rates. The Bill re-established the position in law, with effect from 1 April 2023, to ensure there is "no gap in the law".

Without remedial legislation, it would have been necessary for all rates paid by owners of unoccupied property since April 2023 to be refunded and they could no longer be billed going forward, hence why this was deemed emergency legislation.

Parliamentary consideration

Emergency bills are not required to be considered by a specific committee. Instead, Stages 1 and 2 are considered by a 'Committee of the Whole Parliament' (i.e. all MSPs meeting in the Chamber, but operating under committee procedure, and with the Presiding Officer acting as convener).

The Bill was introduced on Monday 24 November 2025, Stage 1 took place on Wednesday 26 November, and Stages 2 and 3 were completed on Thursday 27 November.

Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1, with 94 Members voting for the motion, 27 against, 0 abstentions and 8 Members not voting.

At Stage 2, the Parliament agreed to 2 opposition amendments relating to any future changes made to legislation in this area. One required the Scottish Government to consult “such persons as they consider representative of persons liable to pay non-domestic rates” if any further regulations are made by ministers. The other ensured that any future changes and regulations are subject to the [affirmative procedure](#).

There were no amendments agreed to at Stage 3. The Parliament passed the Bill on 27 November 2025, with 84 Members voting for the Bill, 24 voting against and no abstentions. 21 Members did not vote.

The Bill received Royal Assent on 7 January 2026, becoming the [Non-Domestic Rates \(Liability for Unoccupied Properties\) \(Scotland\) Act 2026](#).

Non-surgical Procedures and Functions of Medical Reviewers (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 77B

Introduced on: 08 October 2025

Introduced by: Jenni Minto MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 17 March 2026

Royal Assent: 12 May 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Non-surgical Procedures and Functions of Medical Reviewers \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced into the Scottish Parliament on 8 October 2025 by the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, Jenni Minto MSP.

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee was designated as the lead Committee for the Bill.

[SPICe published a briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) ahead of evidence being considered and [published a summary of written evidence on 25 November 2025](#). [SPICe Spotlight - blogs on different aspects of the Bill](#).

The [Committee published its Stage 1 report](#) on 27 January 2026

The [Stage 1 debate took place on 5 February 2026](#) and the Scottish Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill.

[Stage 2 consideration of amendments took place on 24 February 2026](#).

[The Stage 3 \(Final\) debate took place on 17 March 2026](#), and the Bill was passed with 124 for, 0 against. 2 abstained and 3 did not vote.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill comprised two parts, which are unrelated. Part 1 is intended to regulate the provision of certain non-surgical procedures, carried out for cosmetic or wellbeing reasons, while Part 2 of the Bill makes minor changes to the death certification process in Scotland.

The Scottish Government sought to address the anomaly of these higher risk procedures being completely unregulated, except where they were undertaken by regulated health professionals. Any unregulated individual could establish a business to perform these procedures, but if a regulated health professional opened such a business, they had to register their clinic with NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS).

Alongside the Bill, modifications were made to the [Civic Government \(Scotland\) Act 1982](#), to introduce a licensing scheme, to commence at the same time as the enactment of the

proposed Bill, for the lower risk procedures.

In Part 2 of the Bill, the Scottish Government sought to align legislation with England and Wales, to avoid the duplication of procedures prior to cremation, if someone died outwith the UK and was being cremated in Scotland. Part 2 also broadened the criteria for death certificates to be reviewed, by interested relatives for example, and allowed examiners more reasons to reject reviews, beyond 'vexatious'. The Bill also required a reviewer to provide reasons for rejecting an application to review.

Provisions of the Bill

Part 1 of the Bill covered provisions relating to a [range of cosmetic procedures](#) which are specified in Schedule 1 of the Bill.

The Bill proposed that procedures can only be carried out in '[permitted premises](#)': independent clinics and hospitals, registered with HIS, dental surgeries providing general dental services, [GP practices under Sections 17c of the National Health Service\(Scotland\) Act 1978](#) and Registered pharmacies defined under [Section 74 of the Medicines Act 1968](#).

Along with the definition of 'permitted premises' the Bill specified the professionals able to carry out the procedures within those premises.

Services must be 'provided or managed' by a profession on this list, but this could mean that an independent clinic managed by a registered professional could employ unregistered staff to conduct the procedures. The registration referred to is with one of the UK professional registers, overseen directly by [the Professional Standards Authority \(PAS\)](#).

The Bill creates a number of offences. Sections 2, 3 and 11 of the Bill create offences for:

- a person to provide a procedure to someone under the age of 18
- a person to provide a procedure outwith permitted premises
- a person to deliberately obstruct, fail to comply with a direction from or fail to provide information or assistance to a person authorised by HIS while they are investigating an offence.

Offences would be subject to summary conviction and a fine.

Inspection powers for HIS were provided for in the Bill. The powers do not supersede or replace existing enforcement powers relating to provision of independent healthcare services as defined in the 1978 Act.

Section 5 of the Bill set out a range of further areas where Scottish Ministers could regulate, such as on qualifications, training, standards and enforcement. Some of these were because of uncertainties and [unresolved questions about the application of Part 3 of the UK Internal Markets Act](#), and the status of individuals choosing to work in Scotland, coming from England, where the provisions of the NSP Act might not apply.

Part 2 of the Bill amended sections of the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011. The provisions widened the circumstances under which a death certificate can be reviewed, such as by 'an interested person', allows for another review to be carried out, such as when new evidence comes to light about someone's death. The amendments also expanded the

discretion of the medical reviewer in rejecting applications, but stated that they must provide reasons why an application has been rejected.

Sections relating to safe cremation were also amended, such that if a person dies outwith Scotland or the UK, and is deemed safe for cremation by UK authorities, there would be no necessity for that determination of safety also to be carried out in Scotland.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1 consideration

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee led scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1.

The Finance and Public Administration Committee issued a [call for views](#) on the estimated financial implications of the Bill as set out in its accompanying Financial Memorandum.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform (DPLR) Committee considered the Bill at its meetings on 28 October, 25 November and 9 December 2025.

The DPLR Committee published a [report](#) on 10 December 2025 in which it set out conclusions and recommendations. In particular, the DPLR Committee raised questions regarding the rationale for introducing the Bill before the United Kingdom Internal Market Act (UKIMA) position was resolved and the breadth of the enabling power in section 5(1). The DPLR Committee highlighted to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee the breadth and unusually open-ended nature of the power in section 5(1) and recommended that the lead committee considered whether the power could be limited.

Stage 2 Consideration

Stage 2 consideration took place on 24 February 2026.

Amendments were debated within a range of groupings. More detail is added below on amendments agreed to:

- UKIMA and powers to establish an individual assessment process – more detail was added, with reference to the 2020 Act on establishing processes for applicants who wish to provide procedures with a new section 13A.
- Meaning of ‘non-surgical procedure’ and ‘permitted premises’ – Detail was added to exclude clinical trials from the definition of non-surgical procedures. More detail was added on the meaning of permitted premises. The addition of vehicles or mobile premises was included in government amendments on permitted premises.
- Age verification – the manner and degree to which practitioners were able to verify people are over 18 years old.
- Standards, guidance and requirements for providers.
- Support for providers.
- Risk management.
- Powers to make further provisions about procedures – more detail was added to section 5 on restrictions and requirements in the provision of non-surgical procedures.

- Enforcement and penalties – the maximum fine was raised from £5000 to £20,000 on summary conviction.
- Review of operation of section 3 of the Act was added, within a period of 5 years of the section coming into force (section 3 relates to offences of providing a non-surgical procedures outwith permitted premises).
- Regulations under a number of sections, and subject to the affirmative procedure would require consultations with appropriate stakeholders.
- Some technical detail was added to amend schedule 1 and the specific procedures covered by the Bill, and also to further align the Bill to the complementary licensing Order.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee met again and considered the revised powers included at Stage 2. Their [report was published on 10 March 2026.](#)

Stage 3 consideration

[SPICe published a briefing to inform Members of progress of the Bill prior to Stage 3 consideration.](#)

Further amendments were debated at Stage 3 and amendments agreed to on:

- Regulations making different provisions on taking account of an individual's medical history, mental health and anatomical factors.
- Further amendments about laying draft regulations within 3 years of section 3 coming into force to stipulate people who provide or supervise procedures and requirements about training and qualifications. If it is not practicable to lay a draft, the Scottish Ministers must explain why.
- A new section on guidance for the provision of procedures.
- A new section on a comprehensive Review of Part 1 within 5 years from the day section 3 comes into force.

The Bill was agreed to on 17 March 2026 following the Stage 3 debate.

Final version of the [Bill as passed.](#)

Prevention of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 67

Introduced on: 7 May 2025

Introduced by: Pam Gosal MSP (Member's Bill)

Bill withdrawn: 16 January 2026 (during Stage 1)

Purpose of the Bill

The [Prevention of Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced on 7 May 2025 with the aim of reducing domestic abuse (including levels of re-offending).

It sought to do this through a series of measures, including preventative measures, rehabilitation measures, increasing data to inform work to reduce domestic abuse, and long-term monitoring of those convicted of domestic abuse offences.

The Bill included provisions across four parts:

- Part 1 – introducing notification requirements, and assessment and monitoring, under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for domestic abuse offenders
- Part 2 – requiring consideration prior to sentencing of whether a person convicted of a domestic abuse offence is a suitable candidate to take part in rehabilitation programmes or services to reduce reoffending
- Part 3 – seeking to improve data collection by placing a requirement on Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and relevant charities to ask for specific information from victims of domestic abuse
- Part 4 – requiring the Scottish Government and education authorities to promote, facilitate and support domestic abuse education in schools.

Further information is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#).

Parliamentary consideration

The Criminal Justice Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, took evidence during Stage 1. However, the Bill was withdrawn before the Committee had agreed a Stage 1 report. Instead, the Committee published a [summary of evidence](#), noting that:

“The Committee subsequently agreed to publish this Summary of Evidence as a contribution to any future debate on any similar Bill introduced in session 7 of the Parliament. The Committee does not offer any conclusions or recommendations in this Report as the Bill was withdrawn before these could be considered.”

The Bill was withdrawn by Pam Gosal MSP on 16 January 2026. As it had not yet completed Stage 1, the Scottish Parliament was not required to agree to it being withdrawn.

Prostitution (Offences and Support) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 69

Introduced on: 20 May 2025

Introduced by: Ash Regan MSP (Member's Bill)

Fell: 3 February 2026 at Stage 1

Purpose of the Bill

The [Prostitution \(Offences and Support\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) sought to reduce the demand for prostitution by criminalising the purchase of sexual acts. It also sought to reduce the ongoing impact of prostitution on people who are, or have been, involved in prostitution.

To achieve these aims, the Bill provided for:

- a new criminal offence of paying for sexual acts (an offence targeted at the buyer)
- the repeal of an existing offence dealing with soliciting by people in prostitution, along with the quashing of existing convictions for that offence
- a right to assistance and support for people in prostitution.

Further information is set out in a [SPICe briefing](#) on the Bill.

Parliamentary consideration

The Criminal Justice Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 23 January 2026.

The Stage 1 report noted that the Committee agreed with the main policy intention underlying the Bill of “reducing the amount of prostitution in Scotland because of the evidence of exploitation and the harms that it is causing”. However, Committee members were divided on whether the Bill should proceed beyond Stage 1. Their reasons for this are set out in paragraphs 408 and 409 of the report.

Both Ash Regan MSP and the Scottish Government provided written responses to the Stage 1 report.

One of the key issues discussed in the Stage 1 report was whether the proposed offence targeted at buyers might drive prostitution further underground and thereby give rise to unintended consequences for the safety of people involved in prostitution. This was one of the issues highlighted by those Committee members taking the view that the Bill should not proceed beyond Stage 1. In her [response to the Stage 1 report](#), Ash Regan MSP stated that she had:

“submitted detailed written evidence directly addressing that assertion, examining the

sources relied upon to support it and explaining why they do not demonstrate a causal [link](#) between buyer criminalisation and increased harm”.

On the same issue, the Scottish Government stated, in its [response to the Stage 1 report](#), that it had concluded:

“that whilst we support the fundamental principle of criminalising the purchase of sex, we still retain significant concerns with the provisions as drafted in the Bill, and are very aware that there are women in prostitution who have said that this Bill as drafted will lead to them being at a higher risk of violence. With only weeks left in this parliamentary term, we do not think there is sufficient time left in this session to be able to amend the Bill to properly mitigate that risk as well as make other very necessary changes. Consequently, we are regretfully unable to support it at Stage 1.”

The [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 3 February 2026, following which the [general principles of the Bill were not agreed to](#) (for 54, against 64, abstentions 0). Thus, the Bill fell at Stage 1.

In its Stage 1 report, the Criminal Justice Committee included several comments concerning a situation where the Bill is not passed. One of these was a recommendation that the Scottish Government establish an independent commission to report on “how best to legislate to reduce the prevalence of prostitution in a manner consistent with protecting the safety of women and girls”.

On 11 March 2026, the [Scottish Government announced](#) that:

“Former Deputy Chief Constable of Police Scotland Fiona Taylor has been appointed to lead an independent Commission which will consider how to safely and effectively criminalise the purchase of sex in Scotland.”

Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 61

Introduced on: 17 March 2025

Introduced by: Daniel Johnson MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: 24 March 2026

Royal Assent: 26 May 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill aimed to improve the regulation and monitoring of the use of restraint and seclusion in Scottish schools. The Bill's provisions apply to all pupils. The Bill defined restraint and seclusion, and it has four further substantive sections.

The Bill created duties:

- on Scottish Ministers to issue guidance on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools
- on schools to inform parents/carers if their child is subject to restraint or seclusion
- to record and report on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools.

The Bill provided that Scottish Ministers may develop standards for the provision of training on the use of restraint and seclusion, or list approved standards developed by others. Ministers may also maintain a list of those providers that meet these standards.

Parliamentary consideration

The Education, Children and Young People Committee was the lead Committee at Stage 1. It published its [Stage 1 report on 16 January 2026](#). The Committee agreed with the general principles of the Bill.

The Stage 1 debate was held on [29 January 2026](#). The Bill was passed at Stage 1 without division.

The Bill was considered at [Stage 2 by the Education, Children and Young People Committee on 4 March 2026](#). It considered 32 amendments, all of which were lodged by the Member in charge and all were agreed to without division. One set of amendments at Stage 2 narrowed the definition of restraint to "physical contact by a member of the staff of an education provider which has the intention of significantly restricting the physical movement of a pupil, including restricting their freedom of movement or ability to move independently". Another amendment provided that Ministers may make regulations to specify types of restraint or seclusion which need not be recorded or reported.

Amendments at Stage 3 were considered on 19 March 2026. Few amendments were debated, most of which were technical. One amendment provided for Ministers to amend the definition of restraint or seclusion by regulations.

[The Stage 3 debate took place on 24 March 2026](#) and the Bill was passed with no Member voting against or abstaining.

Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 48

Introduced on: 14 May 2024

Introduced by: Douglas Ross MSP (Member's Bill)

Fell: 09 October 2025

Passage of the Bill

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1. It published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 25 September 2025.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee [reported on the Bill](#) on 01 November 2025. The Finance and Public Administration Committee also [considered the Financial Memorandum](#).

The Stage 1 debate on the Bill took place on 09 October 2025.

The Parliament did not agree the general principles of the Bill and the Bill fell at Stage 1 on 9 October 2025.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill sought to give people diagnosed as having a drug or alcohol addiction, by a relevant professional, a right to receive a treatment determination and be provided with treatment, as soon as is practicable, and within three weeks at most.

The Policy Memorandum stated:

“The Bill will give people diagnosed as having an addiction to alcohol and/or drugs access to the treatment that is most appropriate for them, and enable them to be informed and supported and involved in the decision making process.”

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill sought to make provisions about the rights of people addicted to drugs and/or alcohol to receive treatment. The Bill was divided into eleven sections. Sections 1 to 3 focused on a right to recovery. Sections 4 to 6 placed duties on Scottish Ministers and Sections 7 to 11 included the final provisions.

The Bill sought to give people diagnosed as having a drug or alcohol addiction, by a relevant professional, a right to receive a treatment determination and be provided with treatment. A relevant health professional was defined (in Section 9) as a medical practitioner, nurse independent prescriber or a pharmacist independent prescriber.

Section 1 of the Bill provided that the patient would be offered the treatment deemed

appropriate by a relevant health professional. The Bill listed a non-exhaustive list of treatments, and stated:

““treatment” includes any service or combination of services that may be provided to individuals for or in connection with the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of illness.”

Section 2 of the Bill detailed the procedure for determining treatment. It outlined that the health professional must explain the treatment options available, provide information to and involve the patient in the decision-making process. It included a provision for the patient to request a specific treatment and that the appropriateness of this treatment would need to be considered by the health professional.

Parliamentary consideration

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee scrutinised the Bill at Stage 1. It published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 25 September 2025. In this report the Committee said it “is unable to recommend that the general principles of the Bill be agreed to”.

The Committee noted that it “recognises the strength of evidence it has seen and heard throughout its Stage 1 scrutiny of this Bill of a high level of dissatisfaction with current availability of and access to support services for those experiencing harm from drug or alcohol misuse”.

It went on to note that “Douglas Ross has himself acknowledged the need for the Bill, should it progress to Stage 2, to be significantly amended to address those concerns raised during Stage 1” and outlined that “Some Members of the Committee have concluded that, were it to progress beyond Stage 1, the Bill would require such significant amendment that there would be a need for substantial additional evidence to be taken at Stage 2”.

The [Stage 1 debate on the Bill](#) took place on 09 October 2025. Following the debate, motion S6M-19128: That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill was disagreed (52 for, 63 against, 0 abstained, 14 did not vote). Therefore, the Bill fell on 09 October 2025.

Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 50

Introduced on: 20 June 2024

Introduced by: Liz Smith MSP (Member's Bill)

Passed: 16 December 2025

Royal Assent: 11 February 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The Bill aimed to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education. It sought to create new duties on local authorities and managers of a grant-aided schools to this effect.

The Bill, as passed, defined a “course of residential outdoor education” as:

“a course of education that— (a) has outdoor learning as its main focus, (b) includes at least 4 overnight stays and 5 days, which may be non-consecutive, in facilities such as (without limitation) outdoor centres, youth hostels, camps or sailing boats, and (c) is suitable to the relevant pupil’s age, ability, aptitude and any additional support needs.”

Parliamentary consideration

The lead Committee at Stage 1 was the Education, Children and Young People Committee which [published its report on 4 February 2025](#). The Committee agreed with the general principles of the Bill. This was agreed to on the Convener's casting vote, after a division in the Committee. The Committee highlighted a number of issues that might need to be addressed. These included:

- ensuring alignment to the curriculum
- the capacity and the ability for existing outdoor centres to provide residential opportunities for all pupils across Scotland, particularly those with complex additional needs
- how the Bill might affect teachers' terms and conditions
- the cost of the provision and the place for parental contributions
- a recommendation for a quality framework for residential outdoor education centre provision.

During Stage 1, the Scottish Government said that that it held a "neutral" position on the Bill. The Government was broadly supportive of the intention of the Bill to improve access

to residential outdoor education. However, the Government expressed reservations around:

- legislating in the curriculum
- a narrow focus on only one type of outdoor learning
- resource implications.

The Bill passed Stage 1 on 27 March 2025.

The Bill required a Financial Resolution. A Financial Resolution may be agreed by Parliament only after a Minister has lodged a relevant motion. Following Stage 1, there was uncertainty over whether the Scottish Government would lodge such a motion. Liz Smith MSP and the Government held discussions particularly around concerns of [the](#) costs of the measures in the Bill. The Government lodged a motion for a Financial Resolution on 24 September 2025, and it was agreed by Parliament the following day.

The [Education, Children and Young People Committee considered the Bill at Stage 2 on 19 November 2025](#). The majority of the amendments agreed were those drafted by the Scottish Government and lodged by Liz Smith MSP. These were:

- a qualification of the duty on local authorities and grant-aided schools to provide or secure the provision of outdoor education to be "so far as reasonably practicable"
- including a power for local authorities to require a financial contribution from parents to support the course of outdoor education
- a removal of the provisions that would require the Scottish Government to fund residential outdoor education provision under the Bill
- changes to the Commencement provisions.

The financial implications of the Bill have been a key part of the Bill and the scrutiny process. Following Stage 2, [a supplementary Financial Memorandum \(FM\) was prepared by the Non-Government Bills Unit on behalf of Liz Smith MSP and was published on 4 December 2025](#). The supplementary FM noted that the amendments at Stage 2 would change the distribution where costs arising from the Bill would be likely to fall. That is, from being the sole responsibility of the Scottish Government to local authorities, parents/ carers, and potentially other funders. It said, "the precise breakdown of where funding is provided from will depend on a number of variables".

Stage 3 took place on 16 December 2025. Few amendments were debated; these were in relation to, among other things, the guidance Ministers would produce under the bill, and a duty on Ministers to report on the provision of residential outdoor education.

[During the Stage 3 debate, the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise, Natalie Don-Innes MSP, indicated](#) that more work would be required to "gather data to enable us to have a true understanding of the full costs associated" with the Bill.

The Bill passed Stage 3 on 16 December 2025, with one Member abstaining and none voting against. It received Royal Assent on 11 February 2026.

Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Billⁱⁱ

Bill Number: SP Bill 55

Introduced on: 17 December 2024

Introduced by: Graham Simpson MSP (Member's Bill)

Fell (Stage 3): 24 February 2026

Passage of the Bill

The Bill was introduced on 17 December 2024. The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee was designated lead committee. The SPPA Committee published its [Stage 1 Report](#) on 5 November 2025. The [Stage 1 debate took place on 13 November 2025](#) and the Parliament agreed to the general principles of the Bill. The [result of the vote](#) was 81 for, 0 against, 35 abstained, 13 did not vote.

[Stage 2](#) took place on 29 January 2026. [Stage 3](#) was held on 24 February 2026 where the Bill fell.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill ("the Bill") as introduced set out the process by which an MSP could lose their seat in the Parliament through a recall petition.

The Bill as introduced also made provision to remove MSPs from office by changing the criteria for disqualification in two ways.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill was divided into two parts; it contained 32 sections and a schedule.

Part 1 provided for the process by which an MSP could lose their seat through a recall petition. A recall petition process was to be initiated where:

- an MSP receives a relevant parliamentary sanction of exclusion for 10 sitting days or more (or 14 days or more if not expressed in sitting days)
- where an MSP receives a custodial sentence of six months or less.

Part 2 related to disqualification from the office of MSP. The Bill proposed to change the law so that an MSP was:

- automatically disqualified where they receive a custodial sentence of more than six months to a year

ⁱⁱ The short title of the Bill was changed at Stage 3 to the Scottish Parliament (Recall of Members) Bill.

- potentially disqualified (the Parliament would have to approve disqualification) where they fail to attend proceedings of the Parliament in person without a valid reason for 180 days or more (around six months).

Parliamentary consideration

During the Stage 1 evidence, the SPPA Committee heard concerns about the potential for the two-step regional recall process to confuse the electorate, as well as questions over whether the process provided value for money. Witnesses also raised the potential for the physical attendance requirement to disadvantage particular groups and questioned whether a physical attendance requirement was at odds with a hybrid parliament.

The SPPA Committee published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 5 November 2025 and recommended that the Parliament agree to the general principles of the Bill, but stated that “There are some fundamental issues that would need to be addressed at Stage 2 for the Bill to be able to deliver its intended purpose”.

The SPPA Committee described the recall process for regional members as the “most challenging aspect of developing a recall mechanism for the Scottish Parliament”.

On the removal of MSPs, the SPPA Committee noted “concerns highlighted to us about the potential for the physical attendance requirement to have the greatest impact on MSPs with caring responsibilities or health difficulties” and stated that it was “not persuaded that requiring physical attendance is the correct basis for removal of MSPs”.

Stage 2 took place on 29 January 2026, when the SPPA Committee considered 124 amendments.

The Bill was amended heavily at Stage 2. The key changes were:

- Part 1 of the Bill provides that an MSP can be subject to a recall petition where the parliamentary sanction ground (suspension for 10 sitting days or more) or the criminal offence ground (that an MSP receives a custodial sentence of any length up to a year) are met.
- If the parliamentary sanction ground or the criminal offence ground for recall are met a constituency member faces a recall petition and a regional member a recall poll.
- A constituency MSP is recalled if the 10% threshold is met (i.e., 10% of those eligible to vote in the petition back recall). A by-election is then held to fill the vacant constituency seat.
- A regional MSP is recalled if 50% +1 (i.e., a simple majority) of those eligible to vote in the recall poll do not wish to retain the MSP. The next MSP on the party’s list is then able to fill the vacant seat. If the member was elected as an independent, then the seat remains vacant for the rest of the session.
- Part 2 of the Bill, which related to the removal of MSPs on the grounds of them either receiving a custodial sentence of 6 months to a year, or them not physically attending the proceedings of the Parliament for 180 days without a valid reason, was removed. As such, the Bill became about the recall of MSPs only.

A SPICe blog [The Scottish Parliament \(Recall and Removal of Members\) Bill ahead of Stage 3](#) provides detail on the central debates and amendments at Stage 2.

The Bill was subject to [further amendment](#) at Stage 3 on 24 February 2026. Many of the issues previously debated at Stage 2 were brought back to the Chamber, for example in relation to automatic removal from office for criminal offending and removal for non-attendance.

The short title of the Bill was also amended to become the Scottish Parliament (Recall of Members) Bill, to reflect that it was now solely concerned with the recall of MSPs.

The Parliament decided not to pass the Bill and as such the Bill fell and will not become law. The SNP position was that it could not support the Bill, but two SNP MSPs (Mairi McAllen and Michelle Thomson) did vote for it. The Labour group supported the Bill as did the Liberal Democrats. The Greens voted against the Bill and the Conservatives abstained. Graham Simpson of Reform, who was the Member in Charge of the Bill, voted for the it as did independent MSPs Foysol Choudhury, Pam Duncan-Glancy, Fergus Ewing and Ash Regan. Independent MSPs Jeremy Balfour and John Mason voted against the Bill.

The [result of the vote](#) on whether to pass the Bill was 30 for, 66 against, 27 abstained, 6 did not vote.

Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 57

Introduced on: 5 February 2025

Introduced by: Scottish Government

Passed: 20 January 2026

Royal Assent: 11 March 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [Tertiary Education and Training \(Funding and Governance\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 5 February 2026. The Education, Children and Young People (ECYP) Committee was the designated lead committee scrutinising the Bill.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The main purposes of the Bill were to:

- bring together funding for provision of apprenticeships, further and higher education and student support
- improve the operation and governance of the SFC
- ensure Scottish-domiciled students on courses with approved private providers of education can receive student support whilst studying.
- provision for a review of the SFC's credit-based funding model for colleges
- duties attached to Scottish Ministers' funding of the SFC, including the SFC ensuring further and higher education institutions operate with transparency and accountability as a condition of funding
- enhanced powers for the SFC to monitor governance and financial sustainability of funded institutions
- a requirement for governing body members and senior officers at institutions to declare conflicts of interest
- whistleblowing requirements and requirements for engagement with trade unions, students and other partners
- a requirement for the SFC to promote fair work principles to institutions
- duties to consult those representing apprentices and those involved in the delivery of apprenticeships and training

- arrangements relating to funding of national training providers
- requirements for the SFC and bodies receiving SFC funding to routinely publish data appropriate for the public domain
- powers for the SFC to limit fees for apprenticeship managing agents
- a regulation-making power for Scottish Ministers to enable information sharing to improve access to further and higher education for under-represented socio-economic groups.
- addition of remuneration and allowances to terms and conditions of co-opted members of the SFC
- further detail relating to the establishment of an SFC apprenticeship committee, including in relation to the skills and experience of members.
- powers for Scottish Ministers to require the SFC to require funded further and higher education bodies to act against gender-based violence as a condition of funding
- addition of apprentices, their representatives and trade unions to the list of consultees on a range of matters related to Scottish apprenticeships
- a duty on the SFC to publish reasons for amending or revoking an apprenticeship framework
- reporting requirements for the SFC to publish a report “at least once in each financial year” on the financial sustainability and performance of the further and higher education
- provision for Scottish Ministers to provide direction to the SFC defining fair work principles.
- a requirement for the SFC Council to include at least two members representing employer interests
- an increase in maximum number of Council members from 14 to 16 and individuals with experience of apprenticeships, work-based learning and workforce planning to be added to the list of considerations when appointing council members
- a requirement on the SFC to consider appointing apprentices or their representatives to the committee, a requirement for the Scottish Government to provide the SFC with guidance on the committee’s chair, and ‘work-based learning’ added to the remit of the SFC apprenticeship committee.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained four parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) provides a full overview of Bill provisions.

Part 1 gives the Scottish Funding Council (the SFC) new functions to secure and fund delivery of national training programmes (NTPs), apprenticeships, and work-based learning. It introduces a statutory framework for apprenticeships. It also places a new duty on the SFC to monitor the financial sustainability of post-school institutions. It strengthens the SFC's existing functions and provides a regulation-making power for Scottish Ministers

to set out matters about which post-16 education bodies must notify the SFC.

Part 2 makes changes to the governance arrangements of the SFC, with a focus on appointment of members to the Council (the governing board of the SFC). It places a new requirement on the SFC to establish an apprenticeship committee to advise on matters concerning apprenticeships.

Part 3 puts into legislation a means for private providers of further and higher education to become 'designated providers' approved for student support. This is to enable Scottish-domiciled students on courses with approved private providers to receive student support.

Part 4 contains the final and general provisions for the Bill.

Once enacted, the Bill will enable the Scottish Government to move from three tertiary education funding bodies to two. Skills Development Scotland's (SDS) responsibilities for delivering apprenticeship funding will transfer to the SFC. Responsibility for distribution of support for further education students will move from the SFC to the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The [ECYP Committee report on the Bill at Stage 1](#) was published on 9 September 2025. The Committee did not make a recommendation on whether Parliament should accept the General Principles of the Bill. The report said that while there was evidence that the approach toward administering and delivering apprenticeships needed improvement, stakeholders raised concerns about the costs associated with the Bill.

The [Scottish Government response to the Committee's report](#) was published on 19 September 2025. This estimated a reduction in costs from those included in the initial Financial Memorandum. The response also set out latest estimates on numbers of staff transferring from SDS to the SFC.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) was held on 25 September 2025 and the general principles of the Bill were agreed to (62 for, 39 against, 2 abstained, 26 did not vote).

Stage 2

Consideration of Stage 2 took place on [26 November](#) and [3 December 2026](#) during meetings of the ECYP Committee. Further details can be found in the [SPICe briefing on consideration of the Bill prior to Stage 3](#).

Amendments to **Part 1** of the Bill agreed at Stage 2 include those listed below:

Amendments agreed to **Part 2** of the Bill agreed at Stage 2 included those listed below:

Part 2A was added during Stage 2. It requires Scottish Ministers to provide Parliament with a statement setting out financial implications of the Act after Royal Assent.

Amendments to **Part 3** of the Bill provided clarification around the designation process for private providers.

The [Bill as amended at Stage 2](#) can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website.

Stage 3

Stage 3 proceedings and the final debate on the Bill took place on [20 January 2026](#).

New **Part A1** introduces a requirement for Ministers to establish and maintain a national funding strategy for tertiary education, skills and apprenticeships.

Some of the amendments agreed to at Stage 3 in relation to **Part 1** of the Bill included:

Some of the amendments agreed to at Stage 3 in relation to **Part 2** of the Bill included:

New **Part 3A** introducing requirements for Scottish Ministers to review and report on the operation of the Act. Reviews are to take place one year and five years after the sections come into force.

The final Bill as passed can be [viewed on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 60

Introduced on: 12 March 2025

Introduced by: Kate Forbes MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 15 January 2026

Royal Assent: 27 February 2026

Passage of the Bill

The [UEFA European Championship \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 12 March 2025. The Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee was the designated lead committee scrutinising the Bill.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

On 13 October 2024 [UEFA announced that Scotland, along with England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Wales, would be hosts of the European Championships in 2028](#). Hampden Park in Glasgow was one of the 10 host stadiums, and the only one in Scotland.

The main purpose of the Bill was to implement UEFA requirements for hosting the championships. These requirements include:

- Prohibiting unscrupulous touting of match tickets both in person and by electronic methods.
- Protecting UEFA's commercial rights and those of its sponsors and licensees, and preventing ambush marketing.
- Protecting the 'character and integrity' of EURO 2028 by eliminating inappropriate advertising and street trading, including pedlars.
- Controlling advertising in designated areas to support the safety and the free flow of spectators to and from the event zones.
- **Ticket touting**: The Bill proposed prohibiting the touting of a championship ticket. Touting includes the sale of a championship ticket for any value in excess of its face value. There was an exception for the auction of tickets to raise funds for a charity, and to protect those who advertised that a ticket was on sale by another individual where they did not know the seller intended to tout the ticket.
- **Street trading**: The Bill proposed creating an offence to trade in an open place within an event zone during a prohibited time. This included selling an article or a service, providing entertainment, or appealing for charitable donations. Schedule 2 included an

exemption for certain charitable collections. Existing street trading licences did not exempt the holder from committing a street trading offence in the event zones during prohibited times.

- **Advertising**: Like street trading, the Bill proposed making it an offence to advertise in an event zone during a prohibited time. An activity was to be considered advertising if it is a communication to the public for the purposes of promoting an item, service, business or other concern. Existing advertising licences did not grant an exemption to these restrictions.
- **Enforcement of offences**: Enforcement officers were defined in the Bill as an employee of Glasgow City Council with sufficient experience to exercise the functions set out in the Bill, or an individual who Glasgow City Council designated as an enforcement officer. The Bill proposed restrictions on who could be designated as an enforcement officer. The Bill proposed giving enforcement officers general enforcement powers, which meant taking reasonable steps such as seizing, concealing or destroying something suspected to be an infringing article, or entering and searching a place (including a vehicle or vessel). This did not grant enforcement officers powers to search an individual, or access electronic data.
- **Other provisions**: including the penalties the offences could attract and a sunset clause.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill as introduced contained four parts. A [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) provides a full overview of Bill provisions.

The Bill set out provisions in three areas, and the associated enforcement powers and penalties.

Parliamentary consideration

Stage 1

The [Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee report on the Bill at Stage 1](#) was published on 25 September 2025. The Committee supported the General Principles of the Bill. The report noted that the predecessor Committee highlighted that perceived weaknesses in devolved legislation should be addressed in a substantive manner, rather than through time limited legislation covering a single event. The Committee suggested that an events framework bill should be developed to support the hosting of future major events in Scotland.

The Committee also sought clarification and raised concerns in several areas, including:

- whether a ticket could be sold online at face value
- what impact assessments had been undertaken regarding street traders who would be impacted by this legislation
- how restrictions on street trading would be communicated to street traders
- how enforcement officers would determine what is considered a 'real and substantial risk'

- that there should be a clear distinction between commercial activities and those with a social or political purpose.

The [Scottish Government response to the Committee's report](#) was published on 16 October 2025. This noted the Committee's suggestion that framework legislation might be a more effective way to address requirements for hosting major events, but suggested that the timeline to meet UEFA requirements and the bespoke nature of the event meant that a standalone bill was the more appropriate response in this case.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) was held on 11 November 2025 and the general principles of the Bill were agreed to without a division.

Stage 2

Consideration of Stage 2 took place on [11 December](#) during a meeting of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee. The Committee agreed amendments to require that the Scottish Government review the Act in a timely manner, and to restrict the scope of the advertising restrictions to only cover those goods and services in direct competition with the tournaments sponsors.

The [Bill as amended at Stage 2](#) can be viewed on the Scottish Parliament website.

Stage 3

Stage 3 proceedings and the final debate on the Bill took place on [15 January 2026](#). No further amendments were agreed at Stage 3. Stage 3 of the UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Bill passed with 114 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions. 15 MSPs did not vote.

The Bill will be automatically repealed on 31 December 2028.

The final Bill as passed can be [viewed on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 26

Introduced on: 25 April 2023

Introduced by: Angela Constance MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 17 September 2025

Royal Assent: 30 October 2025

Purpose of the Bill

The [Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) set out reforms affecting various aspects of the justice system. Whilst much of it focused on criminal justice, it also dealt with some civil justice matters.

The provisions of the Bill, as introduced in April 2023, were set out in seven parts:

- Victims and Witnesses Commissioner for Scotland – creation of a new commissioner to support the rights and interests of victims and witnesses
- trauma-informed practice – seeking to improve support for vulnerable victims and witnesses by embedding trauma-informed practice
- special measures in civil cases – seeking to improve support for vulnerable parties and witnesses by expanding the availability of such measures
- criminal juries and verdicts – (a) reducing the size of juries and providing that a guilty verdict requires the support of at least two-thirds of jurors; and (b) abolishing the not proven verdict
- Sexual Offences Court – establishing a specialist court to deal with serious sexual offences
- sexual offences cases: further reform – (a) statutory protection for the anonymity of victims; (b) independent legal representation for complainers in certain circumstances; and (c) allowing for a pilot of rape trials without juries
- final provisions (e.g. dealing with commencement).

Further information on these provisions is set out in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill as introduced](#) (June 2023).

During the passage of the Bill, some of the above provisions were significantly amended. In addition, a further six parts were added to the Bill, on issues including the rights of victims to receive information.

Parliamentary consideration

The Criminal Justice Committee, as lead committee for parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 29 March 2024. It stated that the Committee was “content to agree the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1”. However, it went on to say:

“Not every Member supported every proposal in the Bill. Some Members have concerns about the extent of legal reform contained in one Bill and the potential unintended consequences of the cumulative effect of the system changes. There are some areas where we have recommended that further evidence, data and scrutiny is required. We have made a number of suggestions on how the Bill can be improved. Allowing the Bill to progress to Stage 2 enables such improvements to be made. For some Members, the final composition of the Bill at Stage 3 will determine whether they are ultimately able to support it.”

The Scottish Government provided a [written response](#) to the Stage 1 report on 16 April 2024.

The [Stage 1 debate](#) took place on 23 April 2024, following which the general principles of the Bill were agreed to (for 60, against 0, abstentions 62).

The Criminal Justice Committee took further evidence at Stage 2 prior to formal consideration of amendments.

Important amendments agreed to at Stage 2 included ones:

- retaining 15-person criminal juries
- removing provision for a pilot of rape trials without a jury
- adding new provisions relating to reform of the [Victim Notification Scheme](#).

More information on parliamentary consideration up to the end of Stage 2 is provided in a [SPICe briefing on the Bill prior to Stage 3](#) (May 2025).

Stage 3 proceedings (final consideration) took place on [16 September](#) and [17 September](#) 2025. Amendments agreed at Stage 3 included ones:

- dealing with the rights of victims to receive information about decisions not to prosecute or to accept a plea deal
- making further provision for reform of the Victim Notification Scheme
- expanding the types of cases in which a person can make a [victim statement](#) to cover all offences prosecuted under solemn procedure
- making changes in relation to non-harassment (e.g. expanding the range of cases in which a criminal court must consider imposing one following conviction)
- requiring a review into how the courts deal with domestic abuse cases where there are related criminal and civil proceedings.

After debate, [the Bill was passed](#) (for 71, against 46, abstentions 1).

The Bill received Royal Assent on 30 October 2025, becoming the [Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#).

Visitor Levy (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 79

Introduced on: 6 January 2026

Introduced by: Shona Robison MSP (Government Bill)

Passed: 24 March 2026

Royal Assent: 21 May 2026

Purpose of the Bill

The [Visitor Levy \(Amendment\) Bill](#) was introduced on 6 January 2026. The Bill aimed to modify the [Visitor Levy Act 2024](#) by allowing local authorities to charge a visitor levy as a fixed amount or different fixed amounts - previously they could only charge a percentage of the cost of an overnight stay. The Bill proposed some other changes to the operation of the levy.

It is unusual for amending legislation to be introduced so soon after the passing of an Act. However, the Scottish Government took this course of action following engagement with local authorities and businesses. Industry representatives [told the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee](#) there were "insurmountable operational challenges" with the original Act, and it was "critical that the amendment bill is passed in this parliamentary session". Furthermore, there were at least two local authorities - [The Highland Council](#) and [Argyll and Bute Council](#) - who paused implementation of their schemes as they preferred the option of a fixed amount.

Parliamentary consideration

The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee was designated lead committee for Stage One consideration. The Committee completed its evidence gathering on 3 February 2026, with its [Stage One report published on 17 February](#). The Committee supported the general principles of the Bill.

At Stage 2, the Scottish Government proposed [a number of amendments](#), and these were agreed by the Committee, as was one amendment proposed by Tim Eagle MSP. The first Scottish Government amendment removed the per-person, per-night option from the Bill. Another amended the period of time required between a council deciding to make changes to its Visitor Levy Scheme and the implementation of that change.

A number of Government amendments, and one other amendment (proposed by Stephen Kerr MSP), were agreed during [the Stage 3 debate on 19 March](#).

More details of amendments agreed are included in [a SPICe Spotlight blogpost](#).

Stage 2 ended on 4 March 2026, with Stage 3 amendments debated on 19 March 2026.

The final debate on the Bill took place on the 24 March 2026 with the Parliament agreeing the Bill be passed. 119 Members voted for the Bill, 0 against, 1 abstained and 9 did not

vote.

Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number:	SP Bill 63
Introduced on:	27 March 2025
Introduced by:	Sarah Boyack MSP (Member's Bill)
Fell:	22 January 2026

Passage of the Bill

Sarah Boyack MSP introduced the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill on 27 March 2025. The Social Justice and Social Security Committee was the lead committee for the Bill.

A Stage 1 debate took place on 22 January 2026 at which the Parliament did not agree to the general principles of the Bill, and the Bill fell at Stage 1.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

According to the Member in charge of the Bill, the [legislation aimed to support](#) public bodies to give greater consideration to the long-term impacts of their decisions on environmental, social and economic wellbeing. The Bill was intended to encourage preventative approaches across the public sector and to strengthen the consideration of sustainable development and future wellbeing in policymaking and service delivery.

The Bill's [objectives](#) included promoting a longer-term perspective in public decision-making, supporting collaboration between public bodies, and embedding sustainable development and wellbeing principles more consistently across the public sector.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill comprised 19 sections and three schedules. Its main provisions were intended to:

- Establish a duty on public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote wellbeing and sustainable development in the exercise of their functions.
- Define "sustainable development" as "development that improves wellbeing in the present without compromising the wellbeing of future generations".
- Define "wellbeing" as "the ability of individuals, families and other groups within society to enjoy a range of factors".
- Establish the Future Generations Commissioner for Scotland and set out the Commissioner's general function, namely to promote the wellbeing of future generations by promoting sustainable development by public bodies in their decisions, policies and actions.

- Confer powers on the Commissioner, including powers to undertake investigations in specified circumstances.
- Make provision for strategic plans, annual reports and other reports to be prepared and published by the Commissioner.
- Provide protection from defamation proceedings in relation to statements made to, by, or on behalf of the Commissioner in the exercise of their functions.
- Amend existing legislation relating to public authorities to reflect the establishment and functions of the Commissioner.

Parliamentary consideration

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee [issued a Call for Views on the Bill](#) and SPICe produced a [summary of these responses](#).

SPICe produced a [briefing](#) on the Bill.

The Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee considered the powers to make subordinate legislation in the Bill and published its [report](#) on 25 June 2025. The Finance and Public Administration Committee also considered the Financial Memorandum to the Bill and wrote to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee on issues raised during its [financial scrutiny of the Bill](#).

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee published its [report](#) on 19 December 2025. The Scottish Government provided a [response](#) on 14 January 2026.

A Stage 1 debate took place on 22 January 2026 to consider and decide on the general principles of the Bill. Sarah Boyack MSP moved motion [S6M-20414](#):

That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill.

The Parliament did not agree to the motion and the Bill fell at Stage 1 on 22 January 2026.



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