



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Wednesday 6 March 2019**

**Session 5**



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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 6 March 2019

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Finance, Economy and Fair Work

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** I advise members that the Presiding Officer has selected an urgent question, which will be taken after portfolio questions. As a consequence, decision time will be at 10 minutes past 5. A revised business programme has been issued to all members.

The first portfolio area is finance, economy and fair work. I advise members that questions 3 and 7 will be grouped together. In order to get in as many people as possible, questions and answers should be short and succinct, please.

#### Future of the Economy

**1. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its assessment is of the future of the economy. (S5O-02939)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay):** Scotland's economy has continued to grow in 2018, carrying on the pattern of stronger growth over the past 18 months alongside record low levels of unemployment. The Scottish Fiscal Commission forecast that Scotland's gross domestic product would grow further in 2019, by 1.2 per cent, assuming a relatively smooth and orderly Brexit process. However, a no-deal Brexit would put future growth at risk.

Analysis by the Scottish Government shows that a disorderly, no-deal Brexit has the potential to generate a significant economic shock that could tip the Scottish economy into recession. Depending on the scenario, there is potential for GDP to contract by between 2.5 and 7 per cent in 2019, and for the level of unemployment to increase by 100,000 people. As a responsible Government, we are continuing—and, indeed, intensifying—our work to prepare as best we can for all outcomes. We will do everything possible to prepare, but we will not be able to mitigate all the impacts of the United Kingdom Government's approach to Brexit.

**Bruce Crawford:** In view of his response, I expect that the cabinet secretary will agree that a no-deal Brexit would be an unmitigated disaster for the Scottish economy. Does he also agree that

the Prime Minister's deal would cause significant damage to businesses, jobs and the social fabric of Scotland—and my constituency of Stirling—and that the only way to safeguard our economy and social fabric is to remain in the single market and the customs union, or, preferably, to stay in the European Union, as 68 per cent of my constituents voted to do?

**Derek Mackay:** That was a fair analysis. On several occasions, the Prime Minister has announced in Downing Street that the choices were her deal, no deal or no Brexit. We would take no Brexit, thank you very much. Her deal is damaging to the Scottish economy, partly for the reasons that Bruce Crawford has stated, and a no-deal scenario would be particularly catastrophic. Both her deal and a no-deal exit would negatively impact the economy; the only question is to what extent and scale.

That is a further reminder that a no-deal Brexit would lead to recession. The United Kingdom Government would take us into a recession with its eyes wide open as to the economic consequences that that would have, such as business failure, soaring unemployment and reduced support for trade and success. The Prime Minister's deal would be equally damaging, in that it would not keep us in the single market and the customs union. The Scottish Government is concerned by that prospect and will do all that it can to avoid it. We have offered another way through, and we will prepare for every contingency, but the way out of the situation is in the UK Government's hands.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will take two supplementary questions. Shorter answers will be required if we are to get through all the questions.

**Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Last week, the cabinet secretary announced that Scotland's economy might adopt a new currency in the event of independence. Given the potential significance of that proposal, I assume that he has made a full assessment of the financial consequences of such plans. Will he therefore confirm the level of reserves that would be required for the establishment of a new Scottish central bank? How would such reserves be funded?

**Derek Mackay:** That question is quite far away from the original one that was posed. [Interruption.] I am more than happy to answer it; I am just not sure that I can do so in the timescale that I have been given by the Presiding Officer.

I know the proposition that we have set out in the growth commission's report and which I will present to the Scottish National Party's party conference. I no longer chair the conference but I will be happy to attend it in my party capacity.

Considering that I have been asked about potential Scottish National Party policy, I will just say that this is an area where we can use the levers and tools that come with independence to make our country more prosperous and fairer. All the small advanced economies around the globe that are doing better than Scotland have only one thing that Scotland does not have— independence—and that is what we intend to get.

**Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):** The Scottish Government's report "Scotland's Place in Europe", which was published in January 2018, forecast that, by 2030, 60 per cent of the drop in Scotland's GDP would be accounted for not by a loss of trade per se or a loss of immigration but by a fall in productivity. Moreover, the Fraser of Allander institute wrote last year:

"Back in 2007, the Scottish Government set a target to 'rank in the top quartile for productivity amongst our key trading partners in the OECD by 2017.'"

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can you come to your question, please?

**Richard Leonard:** That target was missed, so—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can you come to your question, please?

**Richard Leonard:** —what meaningful steps has the Government taken to close the productivity gap?

**Derek Mackay:** I find it very interesting that Richard Leonard is trying to suggest that Brexit is not the greatest threat to Scotland's economy. I actually agree that productivity is a challenge and an opportunity for Scotland's economy, but the fact is that over the period of devolution we have made more progress on productivity, and have done so better, than any other part of the UK. Given that, thanks to the other unionists as well as the Conservatives, we have touched on the issue, I point out that the growth commission has been able to show how, with the powers of independence, we can enhance our productivity. That will involve people, the ability to grow our population, the ability to innovate and the ability to support our economy in the way that we cannot at present because of the straitjacket of the union that Richard Leonard supports.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Right. I want to have a quick word with members. This is not First Minister's question time but a chance for back benchers to put questions to and get answers from Scottish Government cabinet secretaries and ministers. Can we bear that in mind for the rest of this item?

I call the very sensible Mr Tavish Scott.

**Members:** Oh!

## **Bond Finance (Restrictions on Local Authorities)**

**2. Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I entirely endorse your sensible remarks, Presiding Officer—by which I mean, of course, your observations about the front bench.

To ask the Scottish Government whether there are restrictions on local authorities using bond finance to support investment proposals in their areas. (S5O-02940)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Derek Mackay. [*Interruption.*] Sorry—I mean the very sensible Kate Forbes.

**The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes):** Indeed, Presiding Officer.

It is a matter for each local authority to consider the ways in which it might want to borrow, including the use of bond finance, and the terms of that borrowing. The Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 set out the statutory arrangements for local authority borrowing, which, in line with the prudential code, should be prudent, affordable and sustainable.

**Tavish Scott:** Given that Aberdeen City Council has successfully raised £415 million in bond finance to finance its magnificent new conference centre, would the minister encourage Shetland Islands Council at least to explore that capital financing mechanism to pay for the fixed links that are desperately needed to join the islands in the Shetland archipelago, not least because of the considerable pressures on capital finance that come with every Government?

**Kate Forbes:** As long as councils do so in a fiscally responsible manner, we are definitely willing to explore the possibilities of using bond finance. That funding mechanism has great potential for wider use in Scotland in funding key projects, and the project in Aberdeen is a good example of how it can be used effectively.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I remind members that questions 3 and 7 will be grouped together.

## **Brexit (Areas of Economy Most at Risk)**

**3. Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government which parts of the economy and areas of employment are most at risk from a no-deal Brexit. (S5O-02941)

**The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee):** Analysis has highlighted that all sectors and regions of the economy will be negatively affected by Brexit, but the sectors that are most at risk from a no-deal

Brexit include agriculture, food and drink, chemicals, construction and some areas of manufacturing. Local authorities with the highest concentration of workers in those sectors are typically in more rural areas, reflecting the importance of sectors such as agriculture and fishing to those areas.

**Joan McAlpine:** Dumfries and Galloway is one of the regions in Scotland that will be most exposed if there is a no-deal Brexit, given that between 20 and 24 per cent of workers earn their wages in the most vulnerable sectors. Does the minister agree that it is utterly outrageous for the United Kingdom Tory Government to threaten the south of Scotland in that way?

**Ivan McKee:** Yes, I agree with the member on that. As I highlighted in my first answer, rural areas will be particularly hard hit by Brexit and, in particular, by a no-deal Brexit. It is completely unacceptable that the UK Government is forcing on Scotland a potential recession for no reason other than to deal with infighting in the Conservative Party.

#### **Brexit (Economic Impact)**

**7. Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential impact on the economy of a no-deal Brexit. (S5O-02945)

**The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee):** On 21 February this year, the Scottish Government's chief economist published an analysis setting out the immediate economic implications of a no-deal Brexit for the Scottish economy. The analysis indicated that there is potential for the economy to contract by between 2.5 per cent and 7 per cent by the end of 2019 and for it to be pushed into recession, depending on the way in which a no-deal Brexit evolves. Previous analysis published in "Scotland's place in Europe: people, jobs and investment" outlined the long-term implications of Brexit for Scotland's economy.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Is the cabinet secretary aware of the concerns of fish processors in my constituency, who are worried that they will be unable to obtain the necessary export health certificates in a timely fashion to allow them to get their fresh fish products to markets in Europe and elsewhere?

**Ivan McKee:** The impact of a no-deal Brexit will have catastrophic consequences for the seafood sector in Scotland. Our seafood sector will be severely impacted by disruption at the port of Dover, which will jeopardise the just-in-time nature of the seafood supply chain. The sector will also be required to comply with a range of

administrative burdens, including the requirement for export health certificates for all seafood consignments that are exported to the European Union. We anticipate at least a fourfold increase in the requirement for export health certificates, with a potential additional cost to the industry of more than £15 million per year. The Scottish Government continues to press the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on our proposals for controlling imports to and exports from the UK.

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** I agree with the minister's remarks about a no-deal Brexit. Has he conducted any research to compare the negative economic impacts of a no-deal Brexit scenario with those of a no-deal independence scenario?

**Ivan McKee:** If Willie Rennie had read the growth commission's report, he would be aware of the potential of an independent Scotland standing alongside other small to medium-sized nations across Europe, which would lead to significant increases in the growth rate in Scotland's economy. If we look at how those nations have grown in the past decade compared to Scotland, we see that the difference is not in the amount of resources that those other countries have, as we have more resources, and it is not in the people whom they have, as we have better trained and skilled individuals. The only difference is that those countries can pursue their own economic policies because they are independent.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 4 was not lodged.

#### **Brexit (Discussions with Businesses)**

**5. Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with businesses regarding the potential economic impact of Brexit. (S5O-02943)

**The Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation (Ivan McKee):** The Scottish Government engages extensively with individual businesses and their representative bodies. Those discussions routinely confirm that, although Scotland did not vote for Brexit, it is the biggest and most immediate economic challenge that businesses face. Raising awareness in and action by businesses is vital. Last year, we launched the [PrepareforBrexit.scot](http://PrepareforBrexit.scot) website, which offers readiness self-assessment tools and expert advice as well as access to learning and networking events and grants for Brexit planning support. That campaign can help many more businesses to take steps to enhance resilience despite the on-going uncertainty of Brexit.

**Fulton MacGregor:** Businesses that I have spoken to in my constituency are disappointed with the lack of engagement from the United Kingdom Government. Is there any evidence that the views of Scotland's businesses have been heeded by the UK Government or, as with most things related to Brexit, have the Tories run roughshod over those views in favour of keeping their party together?

**Ivan McKee:** There is clear evidence of the UK Government ignoring the views and interests of Scottish business. I will focus on immigration policy, which is a significant factor in ensuring that businesses have the skilled workforce that they and we need to grow and prosper. That is clear from two quotations from businesses that are in the Scottish Parliament information centre briefing, "Immigration policy—the countdown to Brexit", which was published in January.

This is the voice of business in Scotland. The Federation of Small Businesses Scotland policy chair, Andrew McRae, said:

"The UK Government's obstinate approach to immigration is a clear threat to many of Scotland's businesses and local communities. These proposals will make it nigh impossible for the vast majority of Scottish firms to access any non-UK labour and the skills they need to grow and sustain their operations."

Scottish Tourism Alliance chief executive Marc Crothall said:

"The UK Government's measures on immigration ... could have potentially devastating effects on Scotland's tourism industry, in particular, a £30,000 minimum salary threshold ... There is no doubt that the government's plans will exacerbate the existing recruitment crisis considerably, placing our tourism industry and what is one of the most important economic drivers for Scotland in severe jeopardy."

The UK Government is not listening on immigration or on a range of issues that relate to Brexit and the economy.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I can allow a very quick supplementary and a very quick answer.

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** It is estimated that unemployment will rise to up to 8 per cent if there is a no-deal Brexit. What plans does the Scottish Government have to deal with that rise and mitigate its impact?

**Ivan McKee:** As the member will be aware, the Scottish Government's resilience room—SGoRR—is meeting on a weekly basis to evaluate and bring forward steps to mitigate the worst impacts of Brexit. An extensive range of measures are laid out in "Economic Action Plan 2018-20", which the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work published. The plan sets out the many steps that the Scottish Government has taken across a range of aspects of the

economy to mitigate the worst impacts of a no-deal Brexit.

### **Budget Impact (Orkney and Shetland)**

**6. Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how its budget will impact on Orkney and Shetland. (S5O-02944)

**The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes):** The budget invests in our local authorities, including Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council, to enable them to deliver services to the people who live in their areas, from education and social care to transport and planning.

The budget delivers a fair financial settlement for local government by providing funding of £11.2 billion, which is a real-terms increase of £300 million. Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council will both receive their fair formula share of the total funding.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** Ahead of the conclusion of the budget process, the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, Mike Russell, came to Orkney. While he was there, he spoke about the funding of internal ferries in Orkney and Shetland and the shortfall between what is given to the council and the cost of maintaining services. Mike Russell said:

"this is a big issue in Orkney, and obviously it needs a resolution".

However, a month later, we hear that there is no resolution. Why has this Scottish Government yet again failed to meet its pledge to provide fair ferry funding for Orkney and Shetland? One local councillor described the decision—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Please come to a conclusion.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** The local councillor described that as "Donald Trump politics".

When will Mr Russell pledge to go back and raise this "big issue" with cabinet colleagues? Did he do so, and if so, was he simply ignored?

**Kate Forbes:** I ask Jamie Halcro Johnston why he voted against the provision of £10.5 million for ferries in the budget for this year—and last year, as well.

Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council remain responsible for the delivery of the internal ferry services, but we recognise the challenges that that presents. The budget made available £10.5 million this year—as was the case last year—for local authority ferry services.



We have also ensured, through the local government settlement, that the two councils have the money to deliver their services, and we have given councils more flexibility around council tax.

I ask Jamie Halcro Johnston how much more difficult it would be to fund local services in Orkney if we had to follow his tax plans and find an additional £500 million for those services.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I am delighted that the minister had such a positive visit to Orkney earlier this week.

The minister will have been informed that Orkney has received £200,000 less for internal ferry funding this year, leaving a shortfall of well over £1 million. How does that square with the Government's commitment to fair funding for our lifeline internal ferry services?

**Kate Forbes:** I had a thoroughly enjoyable two days in Orkney and I am most jealous of Liam McArthur's opportunities to go back there weekly.

We recognise the challenges around local ferry services, as I said, and I had that discussion with the local council. In our budget, we have been clear about ensuring that we provide adequate funding, and we have given local authorities, who are responsible for the ferry service, the funding that they need to deliver the services.

### Local Government Finance (Meetings)

**8. Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent meetings the finance secretary has had with ministerial colleagues regarding local government finance. (S5O-02946)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay):** As part of the annual budget process, I met all relevant ministerial colleagues regarding local government finance, both individually and collectively. Local government finance was also discussed at meetings of the Cabinet in the lead up to the announcement of the 2019-20 Scottish budget.

**Edward Mountain:** On 15 November 2018, when I last asked about the £5 million of funding that is required to remove overhanging rocks at Stromeferry, the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands confirmed that he would raise the matter with the finance secretary. Can the finance secretary confirm when he last met the minister, what additional funds the minister requested for Stromeferry and what funds he will make available?

**Derek Mackay:** As far as I understand, those matters are principally the responsibility of Highland Council. The member will be aware that we increased financial support to local government

in revenue and capital terms. The uplift in capital is particularly relevant to the case that he raises.

I have done some research on what Tory tax cuts would mean for individual local authorities. What pays for public services? It is the raising of revenue. What do the Tories want to do? They want to cut tax for the richest in society, which will reduce the amount of revenue to Scotland's public services. If we followed Tory tax policy, the cut to Highland Council would be £23.5 million. This Government is allocating more in resource and capital terms to Scotland's local authorities so that they can get on with infrastructure matters in the face of reckless and irresponsible Tory opposition.

## Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

### Disposable Drinks Cups (Charge)

**1. Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its plans to introduce a charge on disposable drinks cups. (S5O-02947)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** As was indicated in the budget statement, the Scottish Government agrees in principle to the introduction of a charge for disposable drinks cups. In deciding how to proceed, we will consider the recommendations of the expert panel on environmental charging and other measures, which is due to report later this year. The panel is taking an evidence-based approach and is considering a range of measures to address the issue.

**Stuart McMillan:** I welcome the Scottish Government's action on the issue, which I have raised in the chamber and at the Scottish National Party conference. Does the minister agree that, for the policy to be successful, work needs to be done with retailers so that they can change their way of working, including by signing up to some of the various cup exchange schemes and by helping with any infrastructure challenges that might exist, particularly for independent retailers? Can the minister provide any information on what the money from the levy would be invested in?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I agree that we need to work with retailers to tackle the issue. I do not know whether the member is aware of the Glasgow cup movement, which was launched recently by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. Keep Scotland Beautiful has designed the campaign, which is to ensure that single-use cups do not end up in landfill or as litter and that far more cups are recycled. It will encourage people to use reusable cups instead of disposable cups. The campaign has involved working with a range of partners

including Starbucks, Caffè Nero, Costa Coffee, Greggs, McDonald's and Bewley's, as well as the cup manufacturers.

In Scotland, we use 500 million single-use cups a year. In the greater Glasgow area, the figure is 95 million, so the problem that we need to tackle is massive. We will monitor the project closely to see how it goes and whether we could roll out a similar scheme across the rest of Scotland.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con):** It has emerged that, in the past three years, 1.5 million disposable cups were bought through the SNP Government's official catering contract—that is equivalent to one cup every minute. What assurance can the minister provide that that situation will not continue?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I will be more than happy to look at that issue. It is important for the Scottish Government to take a lead, which is why we have removed single-use plastics and have to use reusable cups in Government buildings. I will look into the issue and get back to Maurice Golden with a response.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 2 was not lodged.

#### **Mossmorran Petrochemical Plant**

**3. Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the Scottish Environment Protection Agency/Health and Safety Executive report regarding the Mossmorran petrochemical plant. (S5O-02949)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** The Scottish Government understands that the regulators have completed their investigations at the plant. SEPA published an update on 27 February, setting out that the action that has been taken to date in relation to the repeated unplanned flaring at the plant has been effective and appropriate. Nevertheless, SEPA has not ruled out future enforcement action if that is deemed necessary.

**Annabelle Ewing:** I am aware that SEPA published its investigative update last week. One action point was a forward programme for environmental monitoring. Can the minister provide any clarity as to what that environmental monitoring will entail on the ground?

**Mairi Gougeon:** SEPA recently announced enhanced air quality monitoring at the Mossmorran complex, which will include monitoring of the relevant pollutants in order to provide up-to-date monitoring data and comparison with the previous monitoring and modelling studies that have been undertaken. That monitoring commenced in January this year, and it

is expected to run until April, with the result being published later this year. The location of the monitoring equipment was determined following liaison with community representatives, and the monitoring programme is in addition to the substantial work that has already been undertaken by the Mossmorran and Braefoot Bay independent air quality monitoring group, which advises Fife Council with regard to the quality of the ambient air associated with emissions at Mossmorran.

#### **Plastic Nurdles on Beaches**

**4. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it has taken to reduce the amount of plastic nurdles on beaches. (S5O-02950)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** Marine plastics are a global problem, and we are taking actions to prevent and reduce nurdle pollution. We are working with the plastics industry to expand on its successful operation clean sweep guidance. We are engaging with all sectors that handle pre-production plastics, and we are exploring the feasibility of a move towards a system that is auditable, to allow for traceability and accreditation. On 22 February, at the marine litter symposium, the Scottish Government committed to co-operative working with the other British-Irish Council Administrations to further reduce the loss of pre-production plastics across the supply chain.

**Willie Rennie:** I wish that I had been at the marine litter symposium. There are particular concerns about the beaches on the Forth estuary in my constituency—particularly Ruby bay, where there are millions of nurdles. I respect the minister's answer, but what is the timescale for implementing the measures that she has set out, and how will that be monitored? If the measures do not work, will the minister consider legislation?

**Mairi Gougeon:** It is vital that we work with industry as far as we can, because this is not just about the plastics industry. The supply chains around it are complex, which is why we have to work right across the industry to tackle the problem in the best way. I would rather look at and exhaust all those options before we consider further action. I have mentioned operation clean sweep, which is a plastics industry-led initiative that is rapidly being adopted by industry members. We also have a pre-production plastic pellets steering group, which has a membership that includes Ineos, PlasticsEurope, the British Plastics Federation, the Road Haulage Association and the Scottish Plastics and Rubber Association. With the work that the steering group will undertake, we can start to have an impact on the problem. I will also mention the fantastic work of Fidra and of the Marine Conservation Society, through its great

nurdle hunt, which is raising awareness of this important issue.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We will have short supplementary questions from Gail Ross and John Scott, please.

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** Will the minister outline what else the Scottish Government is doing to tackle marine litter, given that approximately 20 per cent of it originates from the marine sector?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I am really sorry, Presiding Officer—I will try to keep this short, but an awful lot of work is going on.

Littering at sea by the shipping industry is already prohibited under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. We have been supporting a number of initiatives, including KIMO's fishing for litter scheme, since 2005. Over that time, 300 Scottish vessels have removed more than 1,220 tonnes of waste from our seas.

We have helped to fund the SCRAPbook project, which is helping to map the marine litter sinks that exist right along our coastlines. We also had the marine litter conference—I detected a wee hint of sarcasm in Willie Rennie's voice about that conference; I do not know whether he was being serious, but that international conference was vital. It brought lots of people together and allowed us to hear ideas, to hear about what is happening in other countries and to see where collaborative work can take place. There is also a £1 million innovation fund for plastics capture, collection and recovery. In addition, the First Minister announced at that conference a £175,000 campaign to promote reusable sanitary products, which is aimed at reducing the 100 billion pieces of sanitary waste that are disposed of each year.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Phew! I call John Scott.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** My question might have been answered already; I am not certain. There was so much in that answer, which was wonderful.

Could the harvesting of nurdles from our beaches, seas and oceans on an industrial scale provide a resource for general recycling, such as the building of roads, as has been detailed in the press this week? What is the Scottish Government doing to encourage the development of such a recycling industry—in addition to what the minister might already have said?

**Mairi Gougeon:** We are always happy to consider innovative ways in which we can work with those materials. However, we must ensure that there are no knock-on impacts such as seeing

more nurdles or plastic pollution as a result. All of those issues have to be considered carefully.

It is also vital to talk about the important work that is happening across our universities, which is at the forefront of research. I recently visited the University of Stirling, where two important pieces of work are being undertaken in relation to microplastics, including mapping them across the ocean. The university is at the forefront of work in that area, and we are lucky to have people who are leaders in the field, as it means that we can take strong positive action in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 5 was not lodged.

### **Glasgow Airport (Personal Rapid Transit System)**

6. **Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions the environment secretary has had with the transport secretary regarding the environmental implications of the proposed personal rapid transit system for Glasgow airport. (S5O-02952)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, has not held any meetings with Michael Matheson in his role as the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity regarding the environmental implications of the proposed personal rapid transit system for Glasgow airport.

The projects within the Glasgow city region deal are for the relevant local partners to develop and deliver. The Glasgow airport access project is being taken forward by Glasgow City Council and Renfrewshire Council.

**Johann Lamont:** I am utterly astonished at that response. The cabinet secretary must be aware—and the minister must be aware—that the Glasgow airport rail link was seen to have social, economic and, critically, environmental benefits. Given the decision to scrap that plan, is the minister confirming that there was no environmental impact assessment of the people-pod option as compared with the airport rail link option before that decision was made?

Will the minister reflect on the fact that it is essential that the environmental issues around the airport link are properly addressed, and that it is a failure of Government for the environment secretary not to be discussing this critical matter ahead of a decision that will have direct consequences across the west of Scotland?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I was certainly not confirming that an environmental impact assessment did not take place. My answer to the initial question was

about whether the environment secretary had met the transport secretary and that had not happened—that is what I was talking about in my initial response to the member. Any significant concerns should be raised with the relevant councils and the city region deal cabinet.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** What would be the impact on Ayrshire commuters and the Ayrshire economy should the airport rail link, as proposed by Labour, be implemented? Based on what we have been told, any dire consequences would impact the Ayrshire and Inverclyde economies.

**Mairi Gougeon:** Members across the chamber will be aware that the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity was clear in the statement that he made to Parliament on 7 February that there would be impacts on rail users should the tram-train service between Glasgow airport and Glasgow central station—as proposed by the city region deal project—be delivered.

The analysis has shown that, although it might be possible to introduce a tram-train service to Glasgow airport, it would have a detrimental effect on performance and require a reduction in current rail services, the deferral of future service enhancements, and significant and high-cost infrastructure enhancement at Glasgow central station, which is not currently funded.

#### **Hunterston (Decommissioning of Oil Rigs)**

**7. Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions the environment secretary has had with the energy minister regarding the environmental impact of the proposed decommissioning of oil rigs at Hunterston. (S5O-02953)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** As the Hunterston project is a major infrastructure project, plans for it span several ministerial portfolios, including that of the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands. The Scottish Government is committed to environmental protection and to working with the relevant consenting authorities to ensure that statutory environmental processes are undertaken in order to protect the environment while promoting Scottish opportunities within an emerging industry that is estimated to be worth £15 billion to 2025.

**Ross Greer:** As a result of a freedom of information request by local residents, it was discovered that two Scottish Government agencies—Marine Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage—encouraged North Ayrshire Council to conduct a full environmental impact assessment, which it did not do. I requested that the Scottish

Government call that in and require a full environmental impact assessment, but it declined to do so. Will the minister please explain why, despite two Government agencies recommending an EIA on what she has conceded is a major project, which involves half a million tonnes of dredging, the Government declined to require an environmental impact assessment?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I understand that, when the proposal was initially introduced in June 2017, Marine Scotland determined that an environmental impact assessment was not needed. However, I believe that the proposals that have come forward since then have substantially changed and that officials are currently considering whether the revised plans that have come forward require an environmental impact assessment. I would be happy to liaise with Ross Greer or have the cabinet secretary contact him if he wishes to discuss the matter further as it progresses.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Kenneth Gibson has a short supplementary question.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** Does the minister agree that it was agreed on a cross-party basis that there should be no environmental impact assessment because the information was that there would be no damage to the site of special scientific interest at Hunterston and that the project will deliver hundreds of jobs for an area that much requires them? Does she agree that the Scottish Government, through Scottish Enterprise, awarded a £10 million grant to Hunterston on condition that those jobs are delivered, that there is no damage to the environment and that, if there is any damage to the environment, that money can be clawed back in part or in whole?

**Mairi Gougeon:** The decisions that were taken at that time on not requiring an environmental impact assessment were based on the proposals at that time. As I have just intimated in my response to Ross Greer, the plans that have come forward are substantially different from the plans that were first submitted, so officials are considering whether an environmental impact assessment is required.

#### **Landfill (Municipal Waste Ban)**

**8. Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what the timeline is for the ban on municipal waste going to landfill. (S5O-02954)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** The ban on biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill in Scotland will apply from 1 January 2021. Much progress has already been made, and a significant number of local authorities and commercial

operators already have long-term or interim solutions in place. However, we are aware of the significant challenges that some local authorities face, and we are working with public and private sector partners to address them. Our focus is on identifying ways in which they can comply with the ban as soon as possible.

**Alison Harris:** I understand that Falkirk Council is on target to meet that deadline because its current contract lasts until 2022, which takes it over the 2021 deadline. That is in the short to medium term. What are the longer-term plans and solutions?

**Mairi Gougeon:** We are working with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Zero Waste Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Scottish Environmental Services Association, and we are really trying to work with the councils that have not identified any solutions. The target was set in 2012, and we have it in place because we have to be ambitious and we need to set ambitious targets, especially when it comes to such vitally important environmental issues. Fourteen councils already have a solution in place and other councils have interim solutions. The priority for us right now is to work with those local authorities to ensure that we can meet the timescale, but we are trying to implement the ban as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Elaine Smith has a short supplementary question.

**Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab):** With the upcoming ban on biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill, it is important to have viable alternative solutions. Does the minister agree that they should not include private companies imposing unwanted and potentially dangerous incinerators on our communities? Can she tell us when the environmental impact assessment for the proposed incinerator in Carnbroe in Coatbridge might be available?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mairi Gougeon should give a short answer, please.

**Mairi Gougeon:** I am afraid that I do not have an answer to that specific question, but I am happy to take it back to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform so that she can provide that information to the member.

## Urgent Question

14:40

### Severe Disablement Allowance

**Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it did not inform the Parliament in last week's statement that the severe disablement allowance will remain reserved and be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (Shirley-Anne Somerville):** It might help if I start by clearing up a misunderstanding in the member's question. Let me be clear: none of the 11 benefits included in the Scotland Act 2016 will remain reserved to the DWP. Last Thursday, I informed Parliament that the Scottish Government will take responsibility for all 11 devolved benefits from 1 April 2020. That remains the case and it includes severe disablement allowance. That means that all funding, delivery and policy decisions are taken by the Scottish Government.

The arrangements for the delivery of the severe disablement allowance were set out in documents that were published on Thursday and referred to in my statement and in a letter that was also sent on Thursday to the Social Security Committee of the Parliament. They were also published as part of a public question-and-answer session on Thursday.

**Michelle Ballantyne:** There was no mention of the severe disablement allowance in the statement that was given on Thursday. Let us face it, this is another devolved power that the cabinet secretary is asking the DWP to administer. You knew the circumstances of the benefit two years ago in 2016, and it has taken you two years to decide that you do not want to administer it. I will ask a straightforward question. You say that you can create a whole new state in 18 months, but it has taken you two years to make this decision. When exactly was the decision made? Did you already know when you made your statement last week? When did you tell everybody?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** That was a few questions.

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** As I laid out in my original answer, I told the Parliament in my statement last week, in the 11 policy position papers that were published alongside it and in the letter to the Social Security Committee, of which Michelle Ballantyne is a member.

As we move through the process of devolving benefits to Scotland we take our decisions based on consultation with people with lived experience.

The consultation that we did with those people indicated that we should ensure both the safe and secure transition of all 11 benefits, and also the transformation of the benefits that are causing most anxiety and stress to those in the current system, such as benefits for disability assistance that have an application process that is viewed by claimants as being designed to catch people out and having an inhumane system of assessments. That will be our next priority within the devolution of benefits.

As I said in multiple channels last week, we chose to deliver the SDA through an agency agreement with the DWP. The benefit has approximately 2,000 claimants and has been closed since 2001, and, in the consultation that we did before deciding how to deliver benefits, nobody suggested any changes or any particular issues that we needed to address. That is why the priority will go to disability assistance, where the maximum damage is being done by the DWP.

The particular challenge with the SDA is that it is also closely linked to the pension system, which remains reserved to Westminster. The establishment of a separate payment system would put claimants at risk. It is a prime example of why it would be easier to have full responsibility for social security, rather than having to work with the complex and outdated DWP systems.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I remind Michelle Ballantyne to speak through the chair.

**Michelle Ballantyne:** I do not know whether to thank the cabinet secretary for that answer. The reality is that it is like smoke and mirrors, is it not? You say that you want everything to be devolved, but you are increasingly pushing things back to be administered under agreement by the DWP. It took two years to consult on a benefit that is closed and has 2,000 claimants. Can the cabinet secretary tell me how much money has been spent so far preparing for the devolution of the SDA and how much it will cost for the DWP to continue to administer it? It is yet another devolved benefit that the Scottish Government is asking the DWP to administer.

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** The agency agreements between the DWP and the Scottish Government are made to ensure best value for the Scottish taxpayer.

I say gently to Michelle Ballantyne—I made this offer to her directly last week—that I appreciate that we will have disagreements about how social security will be devolved to Scotland and the policy decisions that we will make, but we have a shared responsibility in this Parliament to look seriously at what we can and should do differently. I direct her not to my words but to a blog that was written by Chris Creegan from the Scottish

Commission for Learning Disability after he watched the statement to Parliament last week. He said:

“disagreement is as much a part of the game as consensus. But so is striking the right tone and understanding the complexity behind the sloganising that grabs headlines.”

Once again, I say gently to Michelle Ballantyne that if she has a realistic alternative to the way that we want to do the SDA in Scotland, I am more than happy to hear it. However, let us please get away from the headline grabbing, the sloganising and putting fear into the 2,000 people who rely on benefits through the SDA, and let us get on with delivering a credible Social Security Scotland that ensures a secure and safe transmission and a transformation of the benefits under the DWP that are harming people so much just now.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We have hardly any time left. I will take Mary Fee.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** How much is the cabinet secretary going to have to pay the DWP to deliver the benefits, instead of spending that money to support severely disabled people? More broadly, what are the estimated costs of the agency arrangements with the DWP that will be in place until all devolved benefits fully transition to Social Security Scotland? That information was not included in Thursday's statement.

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** It was not included in the statement because we are consulting on our priorities as we go ahead. As I have said in the past about agency agreements, it is imperative that we deliver those, ensure that we have good administration of them in Scotland and work with the DWP on what is a joint policy. [*Interruption.*]

Mary Fee talks about how much—[*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excuse me, cabinet secretary. Mr Tomkins, please do not sit at the back and shout over the benches when you have not actually been taking part in this question time. Thank you.

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** No policy changes have been suggested as part of the consultation process, and it was very important that we listened to those with lived experience to determine the best way forward for the SDA. We will take forward the agency agreements with the DWP to ensure that we pay for administering the benefit, but the safe and secure transition is imperative, and we will do that with full consultation with those who have lived experience of this benefit and all others.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** I confirm that I and fellow committee members, including Michelle Ballantyne, were informed on 28 February

regarding the severe disablement allowance. Does the cabinet secretary agree that this non-revelation from Michelle Ballantyne regarding the severe disablement allowance may have more to do with Tory diversionary tactics, given that our Social Security Committee will take evidence tomorrow morning on the scandal of the UK Government's pension credit cuts—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Will you please come to your question, Mr Doris?

**Bob Doris:** —which will cost up to £7,000 a year for up to 10 per cent of pension credit claimants?

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** I thank the convener of the Social Security Committee for once again establishing that that letter was sent last week.

It is important that I listen to genuine suggestions on social security from all parts of the chamber, because this is a subject that I would like to seek maximum consensus on. However, Mr Doris is right to point out that it is difficult to take lessons from a Conservative Party that administers the DWP, and the inhumane personal independence payment system in particular, on how I should treat people with a disability and our carers. We have seen a startling lack in the ability of the DWP to look after and support those people, and that is exactly what we are determined to do within social security in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes this item of business. Before we move on, I want to say to the chamber that we do not often have urgent questions, but the key thing here is the word "questions". This item is not an opportunity for people to stand up and have a 10-minute debate; it is about asking questions and getting answers. Many people who wanted to ask a question were unable to do so because of the length of time that the initial questions and, indeed, answers took. That is something to bear in mind for the future.

## Early Years

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-16122, in the name of Alison Harris, on early years.

14:51

**Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con):** In October last year, when the Scottish Conservatives last brought this topic to the chamber, we highlighted some concerning and urgent issues regarding the implementation of the expansion to 1,140 hours of funded childcare. Those issues focused mainly on the private, voluntary and independent—PVI—sector. The problems were many, but four key issues kept appearing: a lack of access to capital funding for expansion in the PVI sector; a lack of partnership between local authorities and the PVI sector; a material variation in the revenue funding rates that are offered to partner providers across local authorities; and the staff drain from the PVI sector to councils.

So, what has changed? The Scottish Government and the minister will say that they have taken action to address those key issues. However, that has come far too late in the implementation period and, for the most part, has been of little substance with not much effect.

In December 2018, the Scottish Government published a delivery support plan for partner providers, but only two of the new measures in the document's 20 pages actually tried to address the key problems that we highlighted in October. Therefore, the four key issues are still very much outstanding.

On access to capital funding for the PVI sector, there has been some progress—but bear with me. Back in October, the majority of local authorities had allocated no capital funding to the PVI sector's expansion to 1,140 funded hours. I asked the minister to clarify the position on capital funding to each local authority. On 14 November, her team wrote to all councils to say that they were permitted to use capital funding for PVI sector expansion, but that that was subject to

"legal and financial restrictions on ability to use capital funding".

That is little help when the confusion around the legal and financial restrictions has often been the very reason why funding is not allocated.

The recent establishment of the early learning and childcare partnership forum has allowed for some progress in that respect. Councils such as Angus Council and Moray Council have successfully devised a working method of

allocating capital funding and have been able to share that process with other local authorities. It seems inconceivable that it took until late 2018 before a successful method of allocating capital funding to the PVI sector was shared. Moreover, it took numerous calls from the Scottish Conservatives and other stakeholders before the Government intervened to help in that regard, even though the issue concerned something that should have been planned for when the policy was announced several years ago. Despite the Scottish Government's letter, I have been informed that some councils are still not allocating capital funding. Therefore, the lack of access to capital funding, which was brought up last October, is still an issue nearly six months later.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Will the member give way on that point?

**Alison Harris:** Which point?

**Maureen Watt:** On capital projects.

**Alison Harris:** Yes, okay.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Rather than the both of you just having a little conversation together, let me call Maureen Watt.

**Alison Harris:** I apologise.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Maureen Watt.

**Maureen Watt:** Is the member aware that, in Aberdeen City Council's budget discussions, it was recommended that funding be approved for the delivery of early learning and childcare expansion and that chief officers approved the business case for projects related to early learning and childcare—*[Interruption.]* The projects are east Torry new build, Northfield public park—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is quite a long intervention, Ms Watt.

**Maureen Watt:** —Tillydrone nursery and Seaton nursery. That is local councils preparing for the expansion to 1,140 hours.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There is time in hand, so the member will get her time back.

**Alison Harris:** The picture across Scotland is variable, and I am listening to the private sector.

The next major problem with roll-out that we raised was the lack of partnership between local authorities and the PVI sector. The ELC partnership forum has at least introduced a dialogue between councils and the PVI sector where, in some cases, none had existed. However, one provider recently told me that some local authorities are unwilling to meet funded providers who are already in partnership or,

indeed, are willing to meet only when a council-run nursery needs holiday cover.

Partnership is vital to the success of the 1,140 hours policy. I know that the minister agrees that partnership is vital, but it is still not happening in far too many cases, and that is putting the policy in jeopardy. This morning, the minister said that everything is on target and that the policy will be delivered on time. That is the opposite of what the PVI sector is telling us. Who is wrong, minister?

The third key problem is the huge variations in revenue funding rates for the PVI sector. The total revenue funding from the Scottish Government is rising, which obviously is welcome, but significant variations in funding rates across local authorities still exist. The variations are creating a postcode lottery for partner providers. That has implications for partners if the funding rate is lower in their authority. They are prevented by the Scottish Government from charging top-up fees to bridge the funding gaps, but the funding rate alone is not sustainable for their businesses to succeed.

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd):** Will Alison Harris clarify a point for me? It is currently unlawful, as the member has said, to charge parents and carers top-up fees for a child's statutory early learning and childcare hours. That long-standing legal position is laid out clearly in statutory guidance passed by the Parliament in 2014. The position is reiterated in the new national standard to be introduced from August 2020. Does the member agree that statutory early learning and childcare hours should be free at the point of access, or—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you.

**Maree Todd:** —is the member advocating for a change in the law?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you.

**Alison Harris:** Yes, I agree, but the policy must be properly funded. The variations in funding rates have resulted in some providers now considering pulling out of the partnership; indeed, some already have, as we saw with St George's school for girls in Edinburgh last week.

The final key issue is the staff drain from the PVI sector to local authorities. The Government says that it is encouraging local authorities to promote from within council staffing pools, but staffing is still a major issue.

Last week, a job was posted on the myjobscotland website for a childcare practitioner at North Lanarkshire Council. The typical salary for an entry-level practitioner role is about £20,500, but the posting advertised for an entry-level practitioner with a salary ranging from £25,000 to £29,000. There is no way that a PVI sector nursery can compete with that level of salary.



Which job do members think that a practitioner working in the industry would go for?

The situation is having real knock-on effects on businesses. Recently, one provider lost a manager, a depute, a supervisor and two qualified staff from one setting in a matter of weeks, with all of the staff moving to local authority services for more money, and who can blame them? Meanwhile, the PVI sector's hands are tied, with no top-ups allowed, and providers cannot compete because of the variation in funding rates around Scotland. The implementation of the policy is frustrating in many ways, because we keep hearing from the Scottish National Party that everything is on track, the partnership approach is working and everyone is happy, but that is just not the case.

The motion calls for the Scottish Government to urgently intervene to fix the flaws in implementation. If it does not, there will be many more examples of businesses withdrawing from partnerships or leaving the sector altogether, which would be to the detriment of children and parents around Scotland.

The minister has acknowledged that the expansion cannot happen without the PVI sector and, with August 2020 around the corner, there is not much time left to fix this. That is why I hope that the whole Parliament will support my motion.

I move,

That the Parliament is committed to the delivery of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds by August 2020; recognises the growing concerns that are being expressed by private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers with regard to the implementation of this policy; believes, in light of the most recent evidence from PVI sector providers, some of whom have chosen to end their partnerships with local authorities altogether, that the problems have not yet been addressed, and calls on the Scottish Ministers to take urgent action to address these flaws in implementation.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Maree Todd to speak to and move amendment S5M-16122.2. You have five minutes, minister. I beg your pardon—you have six minutes.

15:00

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd):** I will speak more slowly, in that case.

In partnership with local government, we have made an ambitious commitment to almost double the funded early learning and childcare entitlement for all three and four-year-olds, and for eligible two-year-olds from August 2020. It is heartening that today's motion recognises and celebrates the commitment of members from across Parliament to that transformative policy.

The earliest years of life are crucial for every child, and we all want every single one of Scotland's children to grow up in a country where they feel loved, safe and respected and where they are able to reach their full potential.

Evidence tells us that if our early learning and childcare are to give children the best start in life, and contribute to closing the poverty-related attainment gap, they must be of high quality. A child's statutory funded hours must also be free at the point of access, so that no child is held back due to their household's circumstances.

We do not shy away from the scale of the challenge that we face together in respect of achieving our ambition for 2020: no single part of the system can achieve it alone. Meaningful and genuine partnership working is fundamental to the success of the expansion. We want parents and carers to be able to choose from a range of setting types that offer different patterns of provision, and which all meet the national standard. That means local authorities working in partnership with a range of early learning and childcare settings in addition to working with the nurseries that they run in-house.

Partnership working is not always easy, but the fact that we are making good progress together in our preparations for August 2020 is testament to the commitment, passion and determination of nurseries, childminders, representative organisations and local authorities around Scotland.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** Does the minister agree that the best way of respecting the commitment of, for example, the National Day Nurseries Association, which is a representative body, is to listen to what it says about the problems?

**Maree Todd:** I certainly agree. I regularly meet representative bodies: I will meet Purnima Tanuku of the National Day Nurseries Association later this month.

We have put in place, to oversee progress across all aspects of the expansion to 1,140 hours, a joint delivery board, which I chair jointly with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities spokesperson for children and young people. The work of the board is informed by regular submissions of data and intelligence from local authorities on progress in delivery in a number of key areas. We published the first progress report in December 2018, which showed that local authorities are, broadly, meeting forecast delivery progress and remain on track.

It is important to be clear that the expanded entitlement to 1,140 hours will come into force from August 2020: legislation to underpin the expanded entitlement will be introduced in

Parliament later in this parliamentary session. We are on a journey to 2020. Local authorities have been asked to phase in the expanded offer and to ensure that the children who stand to gain most from the extra funded early learning and childcare are the first to benefit.

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):** Does not the minister accept that it is a bit insulting to say that

“We are on a journey”

when some nurseries are already being asked to deliver 1,140 hours but are not receiving enough money to cover the costs of doing so?

**Maree Todd:** As I said, I regularly meet representatives of private nurseries. I was in a private nursery on Monday this week and, last week, I met people from private nurseries who are members of a group called 2020 together. My door is open, and I am more than happy to hear from, and to work, with private nurseries in order to improve their partnership relationship with local authorities.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** In the previous debate on the issue, the minister said that

“Quality sits front and centre of our vision”,—[*Official Report*, 31 October 2018; c 53.]

which is something to which we all aspire. We are getting a lot of evidence that the independent, voluntary and private sectors do not feel that they can deliver that quality, because the minister’s policy does not give them sufficient investment.

**Maree Todd:** Through the multiyear funding that we agreed last year with local authorities, I am confident that the rates will increase, that they will be sustainable and that the policy is deliverable by 2020. The transition period is hugely important. It allows time for local authorities and partners to work together to refine local plans for provision of 1,140 hours. With 18 months to go until full national roll-out, it is unfair to accuse local authorities of already failing to achieve the ambition to provide 1,140 hours.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** I am grateful to the minister for giving way. Is she aware that Child Watch in north Ayr will close in March, which is in part due to South Ayrshire Council providing the poor funding rate of £3.50 per hour? Can the minister intervene in that case, which will mean the loss of a vital facility that serves approximately 200 children?

**Maree Todd:** I am happy to meet John Scott to discuss the matter and to hear more detail. I cannot comment on the individual case: it is not one that I am aware of. However, I would be

happy to hear from him and to work with him to solve the matter.

Today is an opportunity for me to share with Parliament some examples of positive progress in partnership working.

The last time we debated the topic, North Lanarkshire Council was the focus of everyone’s attention. It has made incredible progress in strengthening partnership working, which has led to all funded providers in the area being involved in the phased roll-out of 1,140 hours from August 2019. The council has also invested additional revenue funding from the Scottish Government in creating a new grant scheme—as Parliament asked for—which is supporting private providers to prepare for provision of 1,140 hours.

We have ambitious aspirations to ensure that our children realise their full potential. Neither COSLA nor the Scottish Government underestimates the scale of the challenge that is involved in achieving our ambition, but we are committed to working in meaningful and genuine partnership in order to achieve that ambition for 2020.

I move amendment S5M-16122.2, to leave out from “recognises” to end and insert:

“agrees that a child’s early learning and childcare entitlement should be free at the point of access; notes the important contribution of private, voluntary and independent providers and childminders to the expansion of funded early learning and childcare and the implementation of Funding Follows the Child, which will ensure more choice for parents, and calls on the Scottish Government, COSLA and all parties to continue to work tirelessly to promote meaningful partnership working across the country in the interests of children and their families.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Mary Fee to speak to and move amendment S5M-16122.1. You have five minutes, Ms Fee.

15:07

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** Presiding Officer, I thank the Scottish Conservatives for bringing this subject back to the chamber for debate, following a similar debate in October last year.

At the outset, I state our support for the policy of the Scottish Government, as we have done in the past. The debate is not about opposing the ambition to deliver 1,140 funded hours; it is about expressing the level of confidence that we have in the Scottish Government to meet the 2020 deadline and to deliver for children and families, with the backing of all early years providers. Our level of confidence about delivery is not because we dislike any one party or any one organisation but is based on the feedback that we receive from

providers, parents and bodies including the NDNA and Audit Scotland.

Scottish Labour believes that childcare should be flexible, affordable and of high quality for all ages, all year round. The delivery of 1,140 funded hours will be an important step in meeting the needs of parents and children.

I repeat what I said in October: our childcare system is in need of urgent reform. The current system would never have been designed as it is from scratch. However, we are at a point at which the Scottish Government's policy can be delivered only by using the current mix of providers, so it is vital that we address the problems that remain for them.

The flexibility in the policy is of particular concern. The Scottish Government wants to allow local authorities and partner providers to decide how flexible the service they provide is, but we must ensure that that does not lead to a postcode lottery with regard to the early learning and childcare services that parents and carers can access.

Partner providers have once again contacted me ahead of the debate: I appreciate all their comments and the concerns that they have reasonably set out. At the heart of those concerns is frustration about the lack of parity between private and council providers.

First, there is a postcode lottery in Scotland, with local authorities having set different rates for funded providers. The NDNA is calling on the Scottish Government to rerun the Ipsos MORI survey that was carried out in 2016 and identified a sustainable rate of £5.31 per hour. By the time the policy is fully introduced, that figure will be four years out of date. Also, it was based on the 600 funded hours model. That is grotesquely unfair on the private nursery sector, which is expected to pay the living wage to the staff who deliver the funded entitlement.

Further to that, concerns have been raised that the current plans for expansion could lead to a two-tier system in which some early learning and childcare providers pay the living wage and some do not. Instead, there should be, among providers, parity on wages as well as on terms and conditions.

Unison and the Scottish Trades Union Congress have also highlighted disparity in pay between the private, voluntary and public sectors, and Unison has questioned why early years practitioners would put themselves through training only to get less pay than they would get in jobs that require lower qualifications.

At the heart of Labour's amendment is the acknowledgment that local authorities are under

severe financial pressure in delivering a range of public services. Although a £1 billion deal has been agreed between COSLA and the Scottish Government for delivery of the policy, we are concerned that underfunding councils for delivery will have major consequences on other services that are delivered by councils.

Lastly, if we are serious about tackling the poverty-related attainment gap, we must be serious about addressing the wider issues of poverty. We need also to address job growth, job quality and low wages, otherwise the policy of providing 1,140 hours will do nothing to address the problems that affect children of the lowest earners, who should be a priority for everyone in the chamber.

I move amendment 16122.1, to insert after "addressed":

"; acknowledges the financial pressures faced by councils in delivering local services".

15:12

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** It is entirely reasonable for Parliament to press Government on the implementation of this broadly agreed policy, given the scale of the moneys that are to be invested in the area and the challenge of that implementation. As many people know, there is a big difference between endless ministerial visits and meetings and the action that is needed to make a policy work.

This debate would not be necessary if MSPs of all political persuasions across the Parliament were not hearing of practical concerns that currently exist. One of those came up at the Education and Skills Committee meeting this morning, at which the committee heard evidence on additional support needs. When asked what training was taking place for staff who undertake early learning and childcare across the sector, the witnesses were not aware of any training or support.

If the policy is to work, it strikes me as important that, given that one in six children in primary 1 classes across Scotland have some additional support needs, the progress through early learning into primary 1 should allow for better monitoring and flagging up of those young people's needs. As far as I understand it, that issue does not appear to have been addressed at all, but I am happy to be corrected when the minister winds up the debate

Numerous issues have come to light since the policy was announced, and it is not clear to Parliament, never mind to all the practitioners, that they have yet been fully addressed. As recently as January, reports illustrated that private nurseries were pulling out of council funding arrangements

for three and four-year-olds because the new extended hours scheme that the Government was offering was not financially viable. Nurseries complained that the Government funding would not cover staffing costs and that they were barred from asking parents to top up fees to make the difference—a point that has just been clarified from the front bench.

City of Edinburgh Council has confirmed that two nurseries have announced their intention to end their Government partnership from 2020. Just before the debate, Willie Rennie told me that, last week, the nursery in Cowdenbeath that his son attended before he went to school closed, also citing the challenges of losing staff to the council nursery. As Alison Harris, rightly, said, who can blame people for choosing to move on when a better salary can be gained elsewhere? The challenge is a significant one—not just in Fife or Edinburgh but, I suspect, right across the country. I know that that is the case in Shetland, too. The Government will have to find a way to address that.

The other day, Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop of the University of Strathclyde's school of education said:

"If the government has the ambition to put equity for all children with their closing-the-gap agenda, they can't afford any further attrition in ... teacher numbers"

in the early years sector. That seems to me to be a pretty fair assessment. In January, City of Edinburgh Council announced its plans to replace nursery teachers with early years practitioners in order to save money and tackle teacher shortages. A raft of issues have been raised in response to what is currently going on.

I hope that the Government will accept the representations that are being made to members by organisations such as the Scottish Childminding Association, recognise that there has been a decrease of 4 per cent in the number of childminders between 2017 and 2018, and make serious proposals to address such issues before this policy becomes too difficult to implement.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate. Speeches should take a maximum of four minutes, please. There is a little time in hand for interventions.

15:16

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** This morning, in a BBC radio interview, the minister said unequivocally—she has repeated it this afternoon—that she is wholly confident that the early years policy will be delivered, and delivered on time. However, in our debate on the issue in October 2018, she admitted that there were problems, so I am keen to see whether, in her

closing remarks, she will explain to the Parliament what convinces her that the policy will be delivered, in the light of the evidence that all parties, including the SNP, are receiving from various private, voluntary and independent providers.

I come back to what the National Day Nurseries Association has said about the lower rates that are being paid to partner providers, the lack of access to capital funding, the lack of full involvement of the private, voluntary and independent sector, and the imbalance that it believes exists because local authorities are much more likely to want to concentrate on the provision for three and four-year-olds—for which it is much easier to deliver economies of scale and cost savings—in comparison with the more staff-intensive provision for one and two-year-olds. That issue is very much coming to the fore as I speak.

**Maree Todd:** I reassure Liz Smith that the first tranche of detail that we looked at showed that we were ahead of our expectations on recruiting two-year-olds. At this stage, some 26 per cent more two-year-olds are currently in the system than we had anticipated.

**Liz Smith:** I thank the minister for that information, but it is at odds with what we are being told by many providers. [*Interruption.*] The minister does not want to hear that, but I say to her that they feel very strongly that they are not in a position to deliver the policy. The minister has said several times that the Scottish Government and COSLA are working hard on the policy to ensure that it will be delivered, but Scottish Conservatives—and, I am sure, members of the other political parties—are finding that the evidence points in the other direction.

I see that the minister is shaking her head, but I say to her that we have a lot of casework on the issue. We could give her a whole chapter on that and could spend all day debating the casework that we have received. People such as Mrs Alex Hems from the nursery at St George's school for girls, which was mentioned by my colleague Alison Harris, are withdrawing from partnerships. Surely that is not a good basis on which the policy can be formed.

I want to be very clear in asking the minister this question: if we are trying to deliver greater choice and flexibility, which we all want to be able to do, does the Scottish Government recognise that, if we do not sort out such issues, the very opposite will happen?

If it is a level playing field that the minister wants, I wonder whether she will give us some update on or answer to the discriminatory anomaly of non-profit-making charitable nurseries in the independent sector being liable to be hit by the

withdrawal of business rates relief while private sector providers, which in theory could be making profits, are entitled to it. Not only does that make no logical sense, it does not help with choice and provision, especially if some of these groups pull out of implementing the policy. I would be interested in the minister telling us a bit more about that when she sums up.

If we accept that there is a very significant supply and demand issue here, what the Parliament is telling the Scottish Government is that, on the supply side, we are not as confident as the minister seems to be that this policy will be delivered either on time or with the flexibility, the choice and, most important, the quality that parents want. The minister needs to address that issue.

I will finish there, but I would be grateful if the minister could, in summing up, address the points that I have raised, because they are bothering an awful lot of people in the private, voluntary and independent sectors.

15:20

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** I am delighted to speak in the debate, just as I was when this issue was last brought to the chamber. At the time, I had just joined the Education and Skills Committee, and one of my first duties as convener of the committee was to attend a forum in Rutherglen town hall on 28 October 2018. At that meeting, I had an opportunity to speak to private sector providers, local authorities, childminders and parents who had concerns and issues that they wanted to feed into the committee's scrutiny of the area. In these debates, it is often easy to forget these kinds of things, but what struck me at that meeting was the overwhelming support of everyone in the room for the delivery of 1,140 hours and their feeling that this was a transformative, ambitious and welcome policy from the Scottish Government, and one we know has to be delivered in partnership.

I have been really glad to hear from the minister today about the action that was taken at the time on some of the issues and concerns that were raised at the forum and which have been echoed in the chamber this afternoon. She listened to the concerns of childminders and private providers, and the early learning and childcare partnership forum, which has been introduced, provides a welcome way for people to feed into the process.

In implementing this transformative childcare policy for Scotland, we must also protect the interests of the people who are delivering it and ensure that everyone who is working to deliver the Scottish Government's policy objective is paid the real living wage. That is highly important. We must

also remember the number of modern apprenticeships and apprenticeship opportunities that are being given not only to young women but to young men and, indeed, the concerted effort to improve the number of young men coming into this area. We need only think about the opportunities that are available to and the doors that open for young people who take up a career in care.

The minister mentioned North Lanarkshire Council and the changes that it has made in the past year. I commend the council for introducing the care academy, which is actively going into schools and speaking to young people about the possibility of foundation apprenticeships, modern apprenticeships and opportunities in the care sector.

**Oliver Mundell:** Will the member give way?

**Clare Adamson:** I am sorry, but no. It is a very short debate and I want to make some progress.

The evaluation that the Government carried out of the trials, which were discussed at length at the meeting that I have mentioned, found that the expansion was positively received by staff and parents and highlighted the importance of good communication with parents, sharing practice and building relationships with partner providers, including childminders. It stated that a

"focus on high-quality professional learning for the existing and new ELC workforce is essential."

I believe that that still is at the heart of this process. It is about quality and delivering a really beneficial service for our young people.

I agree with Tavish Scott that it is very important that we scrutinise the process and the Government's delivery of the model but, as the minister said, it is a journey and we are learning from it. The most important thing that I have heard in the debate has been the minister saying that her door is open to anyone with concerns and that she will meet private providers in the near future. It is important that progress is made in the area.

15:25

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** I am happy to contribute briefly to this debate on early years provision, but I again reflect, as I did the last time that the Opposition brought a debate on education, that we need the Government to give some of its time to discussing the wide range of issues in relation to education and childcare so that we are not constrained and so that we can have a deeper conversation.

I say to Clare Adamson that signing up to the policy and saying that we are in favour of increased provision is the easy bit; the challenge is to ensure that it is deliverable. It is simply not good enough for a Government minister to say

that there is no problem, when we are all being told that there is a problem. If the Government wants meaningful partnership, it should not just lodge an amendment to urge itself and others

“to work tirelessly to promote meaningful partnership working across the country”.

I do not know why the Government feels the need to encourage itself to seek meaningful partnership working, but meaningful partnership means listening to people, responding to them and believing them when they say that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. I accept that some of the issue may simply be about negotiations with the private sector and the voluntary sector but, from the representations that have been made to me and others, there is no doubt that there is a problem. It may be an unintended consequence, but it is not sufficient for the minister to cross her fingers, hope for the best and say that, if we believe enough, it will happen.

Concerns have been raised by Audit Scotland, local authorities, the voluntary sector and the private sector as well as childcare groups, which are the very groups that were formed to impose on the public mind the need for a change in childcare provision. All those bodies are highlighting issues, so we need to address those issues. If we are to rely on private and voluntary sector providers to deliver the hours that we all want, we need to have confidence that those providers can do what is asked of them and that the way in which their funding is provided is accurate and meaningful. It is equally important that the pressure on local authorities is properly understood. We cannot cut millions of pounds from local authorities such as Glasgow City Council and then expect them to take on extra burdens such as the ones involved in the transformation of childcare.

We need to understand the benefits of increased hours. There are two different policy purposes, which I will address separately in my remaining time. We want to support parents and carers to work. Too many families have fragile work. For example, a mother might work during the day as a nurse and a father might work at night as a taxi driver. The early years provision could be transformative for such people, so it is essential that it is flexible and available locally. That is the challenge. The half-day provision that has too often been given in the past by local authorities is not good enough.

The minister highlighted the other policy imperative when she talked about the consequential benefits that the increase in hours could have with regard to closing the poverty-related attainment gap. However, simply offering the hours is not enough for some of our most vulnerable children and families. Without a proper and effective strategy for reaching the families

whose children would most benefit from early learning, a policy of increasing hours will not contribute to closing the attainment gap. Those people will not simply fetch up at the nursery on their own. I am interested in whether any analysis is being done of the extent to which, where there is increased provision, the poorest or most vulnerable families are taking it up. That is critical if we are to close the attainment gap.

It is a contradiction in policy terms to increase hours but, at the same time, through cutting local government funding, to lose the services that can work with the most vulnerable families in our communities. For example, I am proud of the work of Home-Start Glasgow South, the south-west Glasgow carers centre and others that support vulnerable families to access services. However, we know that there is increased pressure on those groups and that resources are limited, which means that they are chasing funding at the very time when their intervention could make the most difference.

If the policy is to be poverty proofed, it needs to be put in the context of the Government's broader spending decisions. I urge the minister, given her commitment on childcare, to ensure that those choices are addressed as well as the specific provision.

15:29

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** We know that the transformational policy of rolling out free, flexible childcare to 1,140 hours will bring phenomenal benefits and huge opportunities for children and families throughout Scotland. No one can argue that giving children the best-quality early years education is a bad thing, and I think that members of all parties agree that giving parents the choice to shape childcare to suit their lifestyles can be only a good thing.

Alison Harris's motion says:

“growing concerns ... are being expressed by private, voluntary and independent ... providers with regard to the implementation of this policy”.

As I said in the debate that we held on the subject last autumn, a project of such size and complexity was never going to be plain sailing during the planning stages, with so many variables at play in local authorities. I do not think that anyone could have reasonably expected the project to be otherwise.

During the previous debate, we heard about a disconnect between some private care providers and local authorities. That is something that I have witnessed in my constituency. However, last month, at a meeting with the early years and education director at East Dunbartonshire Council, I was reassured that much progress has been

made and the council is on track to iron out the remaining issues. Most private partnerships are now on board and are happy with how the roll-out is progressing.

I am genuinely sorry to hear that that is not happening in other areas, and I agree with Mary Fee that this should not become a postcode lottery.

The situation might not be perfect, and there were certainly teething problems in my constituency, but regular meetings with stakeholders and focus groups—that is, better communication—have largely sorted them out. It is incumbent on MSPs to engage with local authorities in our constituencies and regions, if we are not already doing so, to follow progress on issues to do with the roll-out.

I am aware that some private providers have concerns, particularly about the agreed rate that is being offered by local authorities. I hope that such concerns can be resolved quickly. During my visits to private providers, I learned that although they want to pay the living wage, the funding allocation makes that difficult for some. Providers also had concerns that pay was leading to an exodus of trained staff to local authorities.

The Government has been at pains to stress that private providers should be in equal partnership with local authorities. We know that private providers are vital in ensuring that the roll-out succeeds.

The Scottish Government has engaged with the independent schools sector throughout the process, but, as we heard, two independent schools have announced their intention to withdraw from partnership from August 2020, because they will be unable to charge parents top-up fees.

The fact is that it is unlawful to charge parents and carers top-up fees for a child's statutory early learning and childcare hours. That is the long-standing legal position, which is laid out clearly in statutory guidance.

**Oliver Mundell:** I understand that it is the legal position, but does the member understand the practical position, which is that it is difficult for a nursery to provide care for children when it is not getting enough funding to pay staff and keep the nursery open?

**Rona Mackay:** Of course I understand that, but the guidelines are there, and other arrangements must be made to help such nurseries. I understand the difficulties that they are in.

As the minister said, the guidelines will be reiterated in the new national standard for early learning providers, which is to be introduced from August 2020. Parents and carers should not be

required to pay top-up fees or buy additional hours to access their child's funded early years entitlement.

The Government is on track to deliver, despite the issues that still prevail. As I have said before, failure is not an option for this initiative, and we have to work together to make it happen. It will transform family lives and give our children the best possible start in life.

15:33

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** I am grateful to have the opportunity to debate the early years childcare policy again.

How often do we hear the phrase, "the right policy, poorly implemented" in political discussions? The early years policy is so crucial and has such far-reaching consequences, in so many ways, that the Scottish Government does not have the luxury of not getting it right first time.

Let me be clear. The Scottish Conservatives fully support the principles of the policy, just as the partnership nurseries welcome its intentions. The problem is, of course, as the Scottish Conservatives have said in the chamber on many occasions, that good intentions are not being consistently reflected in practice on the ground.

Partnership nursery after partnership nursery has raised concerns with MSPs, as we have heard in the debate. The minister will remember that Alison Harris and I tried to bring those concerns directly to her by arranging a meeting between her and partnership nurseries from 24 council areas. The matter is far too important for us to be playing party politics with it. With that in mind, we thought that the minister would be much more likely to respond constructively if we kept politics out of it. However, the minister had the audacity to suggest that her colleagues—that is, Alison Harris and me—just did not understand the nuances of the policy. How condescending.

Let me tell the minister that we understand the issues all too well. Why? Because Conservative members continue to listen to what partnership nurseries are saying. We understand that the inequalities between the pay structures of council-run facilities and those of partnership nurseries are causing the mass exodus of qualified and dedicated staff from partnership nurseries to council nurseries.

It is obvious, from advertisements for childcare, that there is a lack of equality in the eyes of certain councils, given the lack of information for parents on the variety of options that are available to them. The Scottish Government claims to be delivering choice, but it is delivering the exact opposite. The minister has confirmed that.

We understand that, in some cases, quality childcare that has been provided by partnership nurseries for decades is under threat. We understand that, if we lose partnership nurseries, that quality will be very difficult to replace. More fundamentally, we understand that, without the full integration of partnership nurseries, the policy cannot be successful.

Experienced staff who have long-term relationships with the children in their charge are leaving partnership nurseries, to the detriment of all concerned. I am most concerned about the ability of the childcare sector to ensure adequate cover for under three-year-olds. Lack of cover will impact parents who want to go back to work, as Liz Smith highlighted.

The Care Inspectorate is downgrading nurseries because of the turnover of staff, and there is nothing that partnership nurseries can do about it. They need to accept the funding rates that they are given. From listening to partnership nurseries, we know that they feel sidelined, ignored and treated as an afterthought in the process.

There is a huge disparity in approach across councils. In South Ayrshire, for example, the 1,140 hours will be available for families from Scottish index of multiple deprivation decile 1 areas and perhaps for some families in SIMD decile 2 areas. However, some nurseries have no children in those areas, so they will be excluded. That is not what the Government's policy document says should happen.

Let us be clear: the Scottish Government's policy is not being implemented properly, as outlined in the Government's framework. The Government cannot duck responsibility and leave it to councils to deliver childcare. This crucial policy must work first time round; there is no time to tinker around the edges. If the Scottish Government does not get it right first time, it will find that, when it tries again, the partnership nursery infrastructure, which is crucial to the success of the policy, has collapsed.

It is time for the minister and the SNP Government to get their heads out of the sand and listen to what is happening on the ground. They must make the changes to the policy that are needed for it to be successful. Until they do that, the Scottish Conservatives will continue to give partnership nurseries and parents the voice that they need, and we will continue to press the minister and the Scottish Government to accept their responsibilities.

15:38

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** On Monday, I visited Townhead primary school, in my constituency. It was clear

from that visit that the school has a very strong early years ethos—through promoting outdoor learning, for example—and it was a privilege to be taken on a tour of the facilities by the enthusiastic Ms Cowan. We spoke about the potential development of a new local authority nursery on the campus. Such a nursery seems to have been generally welcomed by the community and will meet the needs of youngsters in the area. That is just one example of the amazing early years work that is going on across my constituency and Scotland as a whole. I need to mention my own wee boy's nursery, which I cannot thank enough for all the work that it does.

As the minister outlined, the Scottish Government is clearly making notable progress towards implementing the fully funded 1,140 hours in the expansion of early learning and childcare. As others have said, the Scottish Government has found that the overwhelming majority of parents are satisfied with the quality of funded provision and with the benefits for their children. The data that has been gathered shows that we are currently on track to meet that ambitious aim.

Despite a slight shortfall in recruitment, more than 11,000 children are enjoying access to more than 600 hours of learning. The Government is tackling that shortfall in recruitment. There has been talk of the vacancy rate being below the national average, with about 11,000 additional workers being required. I welcome the Government's initiatives, such as the men in early years challenge fund, which seeks to attract more males into the profession via funding for colleges. I applaud the Scottish Government's work to offer 1,500 additional places on higher national certificate courses in 2018-19. We will see more practitioners being trained up through vocational training routes that are in place at nurseries across the country. We also have a national recruitment campaign that will attract school leavers and people who are looking for a different career path. That is all good news, but, from the Tory speeches and motion, we would not think that there is any good news at all.

That is not to say that there are not difficulties, as has been outlined by the minister and other speakers—even SNP speakers. Lochview and Parkview nurseries are excellent facilities in my constituency that I have mentioned in the chamber before. I agree with what the minister and my colleague Clare Adamson have said about North Lanarkshire Council. It is an example of a council that has turned round its engagement with private sector nurseries over the past few months.

**Oliver Mundell:** Will the member give way?

**Fulton MacGregor:** I do not think that I have time.



North Lanarkshire Council has turned round that engagement to the extent that it and the private sector nurseries now work together. In discussions, nursery managers are still raising the concerns that I think Alison Harris raised about the disparity between wages in the private sector and those in the local authority sector, and they are looking to the council to address that issue through those discussions.

I want to mention the give them time campaign and how it fits with the motion that we are debating today. I recently lodged a motion to take the campaign forward, and I thank members for signing my motion and the minister for her engagement with the group. The campaign is based on the fairly simple principle that the choice to defer a child starting P1 is for parents or carers, not local authorities. The group is campaigning not for automatic deferral but for the choice to defer. Unfortunately, parental experience of deferral is inconsistent across local authorities, with many councils being negative and obstructive when it comes to funding nursery places for children whose parents choose to defer. I will go into that in more detail if I am lucky enough to get a members' business debate on my motion.

In the meantime—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You will have to await your members' business debate, Mr MacGregor.

**Fulton MacGregor:** Local authorities must apply the law as it stands. With the new policy on 1,140 hours—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am being nice—for the time being. Thank you.

I call Iain Gray to close for Labour.

15:42

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** As many members have said, this is a debate that we have had before, most recently in October. It is a pity that we have to keep returning to it, because the minister was right when she said that there is much agreement across the chamber that high-quality, flexible and affordable childcare is critical. The expansion to 1,140 hours is a policy that is supported right across the chamber. There is also agreement that that childcare will have to be provided by a mix of providers if the policy is to be delivered at all and if it is to be delivered with the flexibility that parents will wish to see. There is agreement, too, that that means that we need to pursue common standards—common training and qualification levels—and the payment of the real living wage to those who deliver funded hours, whatever sector they work in.

We also agree with what the minister said this morning on "Good Morning Scotland": the delivery of the policy is challenging. Many of those who have spoken today have said that although they agree with the minister, they think that that is rather an understatement.

There are some authoritative voices that agree that delivery of the policy is extremely challenging. We know that Audit Scotland has expressed considerable concerns, particularly about the ability to recruit the required workforce. It is updating its work, and it will be interesting to see what it will say. Unison, which organises in the sector, has raised concerns about the disparity in wage levels between the public and private sectors and the consequences of that—that issue has featured in the debate. The NDNA is still telling us that around half its members say that they will not be able to be involved in the 1,140-hour expansion at all. We do not need the NDNA to tell us that, because we all have nurseries in our constituencies that are telling us all the things that have been discussed and debated today.

A nursery in a colleague's constituency told her that, over the past 18 months, it has lost three of its most-qualified members of staff to the state sector because they are pursuing better pay. An email from a partner provider nursery to another colleague talks about three contiguous local authorities—all with similar demographic and socioeconomic profiles—that offer partner providers between £4.76 and £5.55 per hour. That is a significant difference, and members can understand why providers are concerned by that. Providers are also being offered different numbers of hours and transition arrangements. There are problems, and there are voices that are raising real concerns. Johann Lamont is right to say that it is not good enough just to shrug those off.

Although there is an agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities about funding for the policy, we must understand that the funding is less than the sum of what individual local authorities are asking for in their plans. We must also understand the local government context at the moment, which is one of squeezed budgets. All that members are asking for in the debate is some acknowledgement of all that.

The minister has said repeatedly that her door is open. However, the trouble is that her ears and her mind seem to be closed to the problems that we are told exist. Both the Tory motion and our amendment are measured and mild, to say the least. They do not denounce the policy and they do not demand that ministers be dragged to the tumbrels so that we can see heads roll. They ask only for a little humility and a willingness to listen to and acknowledge the concerns and evidence of councils and providers, and to seek to address the

problems before they compromise the policy, which commands support across the chamber. Surely, that is not too much to ask.

15:47

**Maree Todd:** Let me begin by assuring the chamber that I am listening and that I am willing to address the problems that have been mentioned today. I thank colleagues across Parliament for today's debate. As I said earlier, it is heartening to have heard throughout the debate that shared commitment, across Parliament, to this transformative policy ambition.

We are 18 months away from a national roll-out of 1,140 hours for all three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds, and we are on a journey with our partners in local government and in early learning and childcare settings the length and breadth of Scotland.

I do not underestimate the challenges that are involved, but I am determined and confident that, together, we will deliver for Scotland's children and families.

**Liz Smith:** Could the minister provide to Parliament the evidence that makes her feel confident that this will be delivered on time? Given the conflicting evidence that we are getting from our casework, it would be helpful if we could have that evidence.

**Maree Todd:** Absolutely. There has been much discussion this afternoon about what progress the data does or does not show. I point colleagues to the early learning and childcare expansion delivery progress reports that were published by the joint delivery board. The board is working with the Improvement Service and the Scottish Futures Trust to collect data on the progress of the delivery of expansion programmes across all councils. That is a rich data set that covers all aspects of the expansion.

The first of those reports, which was published in December 2018, covered the period from 1 May to 30 September 2018. It demonstrated that local authorities are broadly meeting forecasts for delivery progress and remain on track to deliver. Indeed, the number of children who are benefiting from additional hours is exceeding local authority projections. I am hugely proud that more than 11,000 children are already benefiting from access to more than 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare, including 1,100 eligible two-year-olds. That figure is 26 per cent higher than we anticipated. We are already hearing about the positive impacts for children, their families and the practitioners who work with them.

**Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):** I understand what the minister is saying about the

rich data set and the numbers that she has. However, does she know how many children are waiting to go into the 1,140 hours? In addition, of that number how many local authority places are still available, and how much is reliant on the private sector? That is where the gap is.

**Maree Todd:** I assure Michelle Ballantyne that, at the start of the expansion, the proportion of the market that the partner providers occupied was around 23 per cent and that, at the time of the completion of the expansion, it will be around 23 per cent. In the meantime, we have not committed to delivering 1,140 hours until 2020.

To answer Ms Lamont's point about Glasgow City Council, it signed off plans very recently to accelerate the expansion of early learning and childcare. From August this year, families with a household income of up to £45,000—that is, 90 per cent of families in the area—will be able to access 900 hours of funded early learning and childcare in local authority and private settings.

I think that everyone in the chamber—or nearly everyone; I certainly expect my Labour colleagues to do so—will welcome the fact that up to 8,000 staff in 960 partner provider settings will benefit from a real living wage. That is a largely female workforce.

On the point that Mr Scott raised about ASN training, there is a £2 million inclusion fund that allows settings to bid for funding to support children with additional support needs and to access ELC, and there are funds for staff to receive appropriate training, equipment and adaptations. The most recent funding round closed on 22 February.

On the point that my Conservative colleagues raised about rates relief for independent school nurseries, the non-domestic rates bill will remove that relief and end the inequality. It is unfair that independent schools that are charities benefit from non-domestic rates charity relief and council schools do not qualify. That will be ended.

**Liz Smith:** Will the minister give way?

**Maree Todd:** I would like to finish the point.

In April 2018, we introduced 100 per cent business rates relief for premises that are wholly or mainly used as day nurseries. That will remain unchanged.

I will take Liz Smith's intervention now.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I suggest that you do not. You are in your last minute. I am sorry, but you must conclude.

**Maree Todd:** I appreciate the valuable contribution that the national representative organisations have made. As I said in an intervention, I look forward to meeting the chief

executive of the National Day Nurseries Association later this month. There is continued dialogue with colleagues at Early Years Scotland, and I will speak at its conference later this year. Later this month, the Scottish Childminding Association, the Care and Learning Alliance and the Care Inspectorate will all support a dedicated summit for local authority colleagues on involving childminders in the 1,140 hours offer. Flexibility and choice for families are hugely important, and I am grateful to all those organisations for their involvement.

My door is open to anyone who wants to talk about early learning and childcare. In my role, I have the opportunity to visit settings throughout Scotland regularly, and it is incredibly valuable to hear at first hand about progress and challenges.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must conclude there. Thank you very much.

15:53

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):** I am pleased to close the debate on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives.

The message from the debate is clear: the Scottish National Party's flagship policy is under pressure and, as with many issues under the Government, the rhetoric that comes from the minister does not match the reality on the ground. I say gently, as I do not want to make things too political, that the Government cannot on one hand try to claim the credit for a noble policy ambition and on the other hand just ignore its shortcomings and challenges. That is the Government at its worst, and parents and young people deserve better. It is time for the minister to take responsibility for ensuring that the 1,140 hours provision is the success that many families across Scotland need it to be.

The problem is that the minister has ignored the problems that members across the chamber have raised over the past year, and the task is becoming harder because trust is breaking down. We have heard numerous examples this afternoon, but I will focus on a few from my constituency that sum up the debate that we are having.

It is all very well to say that the policy is going well in some places, but it is meant to be about universal access to 1,140 hours of provision in every local authority area in Scotland. Ahead of the debate, a nursery owner got in touch with me to say:

"The situation in Dumfries & Galloway is ... fraught. There is no consultation nor any trust or partnership ... we are committed to performing high quality early learning and child care but unless something is done immediately there is a high chance of businesses closing."

Another nursery has been in touch to tell me that, despite having invested thousands of pounds in opening a new nursery following the closure of the only other childcare facility in the town, and meeting an otherwise unmet need among working parents, it has been prevented from offering funded places because the local authority has taken the decision not to commission any new providers where there is an existing local authority nursery.

**Maree Todd:** On that particular issue, in Dumfries and Galloway the share of provision for partner providers and childminders at the start of the expansion in 2016-17 was 38 per cent. At the time of completion in 2021-22, the share is expected to increase to 40 per cent, and of course, the number of hours available will be greater.

**Oliver Mundell:** That gets right to the nub of the issue. If those partner providers are not there, the policy will fail. It is all very well to talk up the policy, but, as an angry parent who got in touch with me said, the refusal to allow that nursery to open and offer funded places when it is the only provider to offer childcare for 51 weeks of the year is discriminatory to single parents. There are people who will not be able to go to work because it will be impossible for them to obtain the childcare that they have been promised.

Another parent believes that the nursery in question is best placed to deliver outcomes for their child, who requires additional support and will benefit from being in a smaller environment.

The next issue is perhaps even worse. A nursery has been told that its business lease—the nursery is in part of a school, in which it has operated for the past 13 years—is to be terminated. When the nursery asked why, it turns out that it is to make room for a local authority nursery.

Those three examples follow a case that I raised with the minister before Christmas, in which a nursery in Annan that had been asked to deliver 1,140 hours in January was still trying to find out from the council at 4pm on 21 December what its funded rates would be. That does not sound like partnership working to me.

I have chosen not to name the nurseries in question, because I do not want to further alarm parents. However, is the minister willing to personally investigate those unresolved cases and to give a guarantee that the policy that is delivered on the ground is the same policy that the Government has announced? Does the minister accept that such serious, systematic issues and failings at this stage, in one local authority area, are enough of a problem for the Scottish

Government to step in, or are we meant to wait until it is too late?

Even the Scottish Government's own deputy director of early learning and childcare appears to recognise the problem and said in a recent email to directors of education:

"there is a continuing sense at forum meetings that not all providers feel that they are being equally treated by their commissioning local authorities."

That same official was concerned to hear that the national standard requirements were being incorrectly interpreted in some areas.

If this really is a national policy, when will we see national leadership from the Scottish Government to iron out the differences and to ensure that the whole sector is valued and that the existing skill base and talents offered by the private and voluntary sector are put to maximum use?

The time for warm words and positive aspirations is over. If the policy is going to deliver on its potential, we need action. We need firm commitments from the minister that she is going to intervene and get the policy back on track. Is the minister ready to take full ownership of the policy or would the Government rather blame individual local authorities and focus on regional inconsistencies?

Like the Scottish Conservatives, parents and young people would rather just see the policy fixed, and I urge members to support our motion at decision time.

## Supporting Scottish Agriculture

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-16123, in the name of Donald Cameron, on supporting Scottish agriculture.

16:00

**Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests regarding farming and crofting.

Many members will be aware that we had a similar discussion in the chamber about farming policy a couple of months ago. The Scottish Government's welcome, if belated, U-turn on less favoured area support scheme payments dominated that debate, as did arguments about the United Kingdom's and Scotland's agriculture bills. For the record, I note that we continue to believe that Scotland should be included in the UK bill and that, by rejecting an offer to extend the powers in that bill to Scotland, the SNP is failing Scottish agriculture. However, we did not get as much discussion as many of us would have liked on the specifics of a future support system. That is just one reason why we have brought the debate to the chamber today, and I make no apology for that.

In addition, although Brexit is at the forefront of many people's minds, that is no reason, in our view, for the Scottish Government to delay setting out its thinking on agriculture support. Leaving the European Union and the common agricultural policy provides us with a unique opportunity to rethink how we support farming. Almost three years have elapsed since the vote to leave the EU, but, in comparison with England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we have had precious little detail or leadership from the Scottish Government.

**The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing):** I thank Mr Cameron for giving way. I do not accept what he says. However, do the Scottish Conservatives have any specific policy of their own with regard to the future of financial support for Scottish agriculture?

**Donald Cameron:** I look forward to setting that out right now.

Likewise, the continuing round of Government expert groups, task forces, advisory bodies and consultation exercises should not prevent the Government from providing details. However well intentioned those groups are and however well qualified the people who contribute are, we now need to see concrete specifics from the Government. The fact is that Scotland's agricultural community remains firmly in the dark

about the SNP's plans for support and what it wants to achieve for farmers, crofters and land managers. Unlike people in other parts of the UK, we, in Scotland, have had little direction, lots of posturing and no real action.

That is why we have brought forward the debate—to set out our plans for supporting Scottish agriculture. If the SNP will not set out its vision, we will set out ours, and I look forward to contributions from across the chamber. I really think that we can build a consensus around several points, as there is an overlap and many principles that many of us share.

Our starting point is that any support system must not create friction with the internal UK market, which is by far our biggest market and is of crucial importance to our farmers and crofters. Our focus is on practical, simple support that farmers can access easily and quickly. We want the Government to support environmental measures, new technologies, new entrants to farming and flexibility for those in farming as well as those who wish to exit the sector with dignity. Scotland's unique landscape poses challenges and opportunities, which we will embrace. Above all, Scotland's farmers deserve an ambitious programme of support and encouragement that will ensure that our rural communities capitalise on the opportunity that we now have.

As our motion states, we believe that there are several key principles that must be adhered to, which are as follows. First and foremost, we believe that food production and productivity must be at the heart of future farming policy. That is vital if the Scottish Government is to achieve its ambition of doubling the value of food and drink from £15 billion to £30 billion by 2030—an ambition that we share. Scotland has some of the finest food and drink products in the world, and it is important that we create the conditions for the sector to thrive and for producers to maintain the supply of high-quality goods.

However, to ensure that that growth does not come at a cost to producers, we must do all that we can to guarantee that our farmers and crofters will get a fairer return for their products. We therefore propose working with the UK Government to widen and strengthen the powers of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, so that our food suppliers are treated more fairly. We would also look to work with the UK Government to ensure that better and clearer food labelling helps to build brands and deliver better prices, driving up sales and productivity. Last year, the total income from farming fell by 8 per cent, with productivity falling for the third year in a row, and we want to reverse those worrying trends.

Another important step is to encourage and incentivise farmers to invest in new technologies

such as global positioning system targeting input systems for arable farms and new weighing systems to make farming and crofting smarter and more efficient.

Secondly, we believe in regional differentiation. There must be a recognition that Scottish agriculture has unique circumstances, with 85 per cent of land being classed as less favoured. The remoteness of many of our farms and crofts often drives up costs and makes it more difficult to transport livestock to slaughter or to market. NFU Scotland has said that any sudden loss of support to less favoured areas could render many hill farms and crofts “unsustainable”. We, too, believe that a tailored Scottish system should deliver a menu of targeted options that are designed to meet regional and sectoral needs, as opposed to our having a one-size-fits-all approach.

Thirdly, a key component of a future agriculture policy is environmental protection. We must recognise our commitments to protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint. I put on record my admiration for the many things that farmers and crofters are already doing to reduce their carbon emissions voluntarily. From planting hedgerows and trees to improving animal health and diet or cutting methane output, the sector is already taking the challenge seriously. We agree with NFUS that there is huge potential in having a suite of environmental measures that offer real, practical choices to every farm and croft. We need to promote the environment specifically as one of the key priorities for farming policy and assist those in the sector with what they are already doing.

Fourthly, we believe in simplification. Given the utter chaos that has been caused by the Scottish National Party Government's inability to deliver common agricultural policy payments on time to our farmers and crofters, it is clear that any future support system must be different. It should be easier to access and apply for, simpler to administer and able to deal with genuine mistakes and errors. We believe that there must be a clear distinction between minor and major non-compliance, with proportionate penalties in any given case. We should aim to reduce bureaucracy, and there should be fewer but better-targeted inspections. In short, a system must be delivered that removes many of the burdens that exist and that supports our farmers and crofters instead of working against them.

Fifthly, we believe that the future of Scottish agriculture can be guaranteed only by encouraging the next generation to enter it. We must be able to attract new entrants to ensure that farming and crofting remain sustainable and productive. We must make it easier to work in the sector, offer new opportunities to develop new

skills, promote flexible working and the diversification of businesses, and, as I said, make it easier for those who want to leave farming to do so. It is vital that we equip our farmers and crofters with the necessary skills, training and knowledge to drive up productivity while supporting new, complementary enterprises that those in the sector are undertaking alongside farming and crofting.

A large part of that will come down to how much we invest in research, development and innovation, but the approach also acknowledges the role of advisory services. In addition, we support a rural network to raise awareness and provide a link with innovation.

I note the various amendments to the motion, and I sympathise with elements of them—particularly the part of Rhoda Grant’s amendment that talks about rural poverty and repopulation. I am sympathetic to that point, but I wonder whether it is suitable for agriculture support funding to promote those specific issues.

I have laid out just some of our ideas, and we will actively work with the Scottish Government to see them come to fruition. However, we will do that in the absence of any real, concrete measures from the SNP.

I will end with some questions, although I have no great expectation of answers. What system of support can farmers and crofters expect? Will it be easier to use? What specific support will the Government offer to encourage farmers to cut carbon, attract the next generation and drive up productivity? Does the Scottish Government believe that we should recognise regional differences and tailor support to the unique needs of farming and crofting? What is the Scottish Government’s position on the capping of payments and the length of any transition period? When can we expect to see a Scottish agriculture bill? That is an important question, because our agricultural communities rightly expect concrete proposals that will enable them to plan for the future. The Scottish Conservatives are willing to make that case; now is the time for the SNP to do so, too.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that future agricultural policy should have at its heart the following principles: productivity, regional differentiation, environmental protection, simplification, and research and education that secures the future of farming careers; believes that the Scottish Government’s failure to develop an agricultural policy for Scotland is having a detrimental effect on the country’s farmers and crofters, and calls on the Scottish Government to set out its position regarding the main elements of a future support system for farming in Scotland.

16:08

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** I welcome the opportunity to debate the support that we give to our farming and crofting sector, because it is an iconic industry that not only forms part of our diverse rural economy but is an integral part of our economy as a whole.

However, I must take serious issue with the motion that has been lodged by Donald Cameron, because it contains a quite astonishing and glaring omission. The one thing that Donald Cameron fails to mention is the single biggest threat to farmers, crofters, our rural economy and Scotland as a whole: Brexit.

We are only 23 days away from exit day, and we still have no idea whether we will be leaving with a bad deal or—truly catastrophic—no deal, which the United Kingdom Government belligerently refuses to rule out. That belligerence translates into recklessness—a reckless failure to give certainty on future funding arrangements, reckless inability to rule out tariffs on our most valuable exports, and a callous recklessness in refusing to give certainty to the EU citizens who live and work in our rural, coastal and island communities.

As a Government, we have made our position clear: we will continue to support farming and crofting through payment of common agricultural policy support this year and next. We have set out our proposals in the document “Stability and Simplicity: proposals for a rural funding transition period”, and we have a clear five-year plan to see the industry through the transition following the UK’s exit from the EU and beyond.

Scotland is the only part of the UK with such a detailed transition plan. Our commitment to that work is already being put into effect by the simplification task force, which first met in December 2018 and met again on 13 February 2019. In addition, through a Lib Dem amendment, we as a Parliament agreed to convene a group of producers, consumers and environmental organisations

“to inform and recommend a new bespoke policy on farming and food production for Scotland”.

The simple fact is that, while we are taking those concrete steps in Scotland, south of the border the UK Government is taking us ever closer to the Brexit cliff edge. As if the persistent threat, 23 days from EU exit, of a no-deal Brexit was not enough, we still have no clarity on a number of key issues that are affecting our rural economy now. The UK Government has said that it will continue

“to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support”

until the end of the current session of the UK Parliament. We still do not know what “farm support” means. Not all pillar 2 funding is guaranteed, which puts at risk investment in forestry.

We also do not know about the position on LEADER, which is a fund that has played an integral role in empowering rural communities for more than 25 years. Last week, I spoke at an event in Parliament to recognise the massive impact that LEADER has had in our rural areas, and I opened a LEADER-funded community hub in my home city of Brechin on Saturday morning, which is one of four LEADER-funded projects in Brechin alone.

The Tory motion is shamefully silent on questions about future funding and the implications for our wider rural economy. In the two and a bit years since the referendum, we have had just one statement on the detail of the shared prosperity fund. A consultation on it was due to take place last year, but we are still waiting. What exactly will it fund? Who knows?

We also need to recognise the very real and immediate threats across the whole rural economy: farmers, fishers and seafood producers will be hit harder than anyone else. If the UK does not receive third-country listing from day 1, we will lose access to 96 per cent of our export market for lamb. If we get that listing, tariffs on sheep meat will be about 40 per cent, and we can expect the same tariff across red meats.

The EU is also a key market for seafood exports, accounting for 77 per cent of all our overseas seafood exports. The market will be particularly badly hit by non-tariff barriers, including the need for export health certificates, which would see a fourfold increase in administration for the salmon industry alone and would cost an extra £15 million a year. There is no word of that in the Tory motion.

People across our food supply chains are being forced to spend from tens of thousands of pounds to millions of pounds to prepare for a no-deal Brexit. It might never happen, but the UK Government refuses to rule it out.

Above all that, what lies at the heart of the debate is people. I am talking not only about the people who work on our farms and crofts and in abattoirs and processing, but the people who are in all the jobs that keep our rural communities going, including nurses, social care workers and hospitality workers. A large number of those workers are EU citizens. In the north-east, 70 per cent of the people who work in fish processing and 95 per cent of vets in abattoirs are EU citizens. How will our rural economy continue to function without the people who sit at its very heart?

This is not just about the economic imperative behind the movement of people: we are talking about people's lives. I would love to hear what the Tories have to say to my family and my friends, and to the hundreds of thousands of other families who are affected by the hostile environment that its Government has created. People—many of whom have known only Scotland as their home—now have to apply for the right to stay in Scotland.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** Most of, if not all, the problems that the minister has outlined are happening on her watch. This is nothing to do with Brexit; those things are happening on the minister's watch, now. She should answer that.

**Mairi Gougeon:** John Scott says that the threat to EU citizens is happening on our watch, when it is because of the policies that the Tory Government in Westminster is pursuing. Is that happening on our watch? The Tory Government's policies are absolutely abhorrent, and I have absolutely nothing to do with them. As I said, the policies are affecting my family and hundreds of thousands of other families across the country, right now.

On 10 January in Parliament, we were able to achieve consensus on our shared approach to future rural policy. Compare that with the approach that has been taken south of the border, where there have been 26 ministerial resignations over Brexit since last year. The most recent resignation was that of George Eustice, who was the Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, such little faith has he in his Government's policy direction. That is why I will take no lectures or lessons from the Tories on rural policy.

The Scottish Government will continue to do what it has always done, which is to stand up for our farmers, crofters, fishermen, fish processors, EU citizens and rural and island communities, while working collaboratively to build policy for the future.

I move amendment S5M-16123.2, to leave out from “future agricultural policy” to end, and insert:

“the principles that it agreed following the debate on motion S5M-15279 on 10 January 2019 should be at the heart of future rural policy, namely sustainability, simplicity, innovation, inclusion, productivity and profitability; recognises the significant role that research and education should play to secure future careers in rural industries; reaffirms its view that a no deal outcome to the current negotiations on EU withdrawal would be completely unacceptable, not least because of its potential disastrous impact on Scotland's rural economy, and agrees that, as well as supporting Scotland's farming and crofting sector, a future funding system should also support rural, coastal and island community activity and promote environmental stewardship.”

16:15

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Two months ago, we had a similar debate in an attempt to provide our crofters and farmers with an indication of what Scotland's priorities for agriculture will be post-Brexit. We appear to be no further forward.

I cannot disagree with the Conservative motion or the Government amendment to it, although I would have hoped that the Government would use its amendment to provide more detail.

Brexit has caused the uncertainty, but the Scottish Government cannot simply wash its hands of it. It is for the Government to govern, regardless of the circumstances in which it finds itself. It is for the Government to steer the direction of travel for our farmers and crofters, and to give them the information that they need to plan for Brexit. The Scottish Government cannot simply carry on as before.

The mood of the debate so far has been unhelpful. Rather than trade insults across the chamber, the Scottish Government must use the opportunity of the debate to provide an outline of its plans.

Our current system is very biased towards production; it allows farmers who could run profitable businesses without support to receive the lion's share of the available support. The top five recipients of single farm payments in Scotland receive more than the bottom 3,500 recipients combined. Sadly, 45 per cent of farms make an income that is equivalent to less than the minimum agricultural wage, and 23 per cent of farms make a loss. That is why the debate is also about poverty. It is arguable that those businesses offer the most by way of public good—however, they receive the least in the way of funding.

I said all that a month ago in the debate then. I want to hear what the Scottish Government has done since then, as a result of what was said. How does the Government plan to ensure that public money is used for the public good, rather than for personal gain? Our amendment sets priorities for an inclusive system that directs investment where it is most needed, tackles rural and food poverty and supports repopulation.

The Scottish Government has two opportunities to lay out its future policy, because there is to be an agriculture bill and a good food nation bill. If the Government was truly ambitious, there would be one bill encompassing both and making the connection between support and outcomes. We have fantastic and world-renowned produce, yet many of our people are malnourished. Therefore, what we want from our farmers and crofters has to be the basis of the new farming support scheme. Central to that is a good food nation bill.

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** Does Rhoda Grant agree that the opportunity exists to expand the great food that she speaks of into our schools and hospitals where—through the Government-controlled Scotland Excel website procurement contracts—only 16 per cent of the food currently comes from Scotland?

**Rhoda Grant:** I agree. After finishing this point, I will come on to that one, which must be made.

We agree with the principles of

"sustainability, simplicity, innovation, inclusion, productivity and profitability".

They are all laudable, but we also want a right to food. Too many of our children grow up in food poverty, which is storing up problems for future generations and the health service and affects their lifespan and life chances.

Farming and crofting are economic drivers as well as food producers, but the profit from the industry often goes to the people in the long food chain between field and fork. As Brian Whittle said, we need to find ways to tackle that, because rural poverty surely could be tackled by shortening the food chain and keeping the wealth in our communities.

Local procurement could cut costs for the public sector while also supporting the local agriculture industry. The potential to allow farmers and crofters to sell direct to public bodies is something that we have always talked about in Parliament but have never realised. We need to encourage co-operative working between individual businesses, which would allow them to compete for contracts and ensure the supply of goods. However, we also need to look at how small producers could access such contracts on their own. Such enterprises need support to get off the ground and to work towards being able to get into that procurement market.

New schemes must also recognise that co-operative working is important; they must encourage it rather than discourage it, which the current schemes often do by not recognising equipment rings and common grazings, for example, which are fundamental to rural farming and crofting.

If we are to halt depopulation and turn it around, we must maximise the impact of the industry and make sure that secondary processing also remains in communities.

We recognise the uncertainty that prevails and the impact that it has on our agriculture sector. We need an indication of what the future holds. We believe that we have an opportunity to build a policy and strategy that will support farming communities, going forward.



I move amendment S5M-16123.1, to insert at end:

“, and notes that any future system of rural payments should have inclusion as a principle, prioritise payments for those most in need, tackle rural and food poverty, and support repopulation in rural areas.”

16:21

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** Once again, we are debating a motion on farming policy that fails to address the crisis that climate change poses to our farms, coastlines, communities and future generations in Scotland. During the debate in the chamber on 10 January, I made it clear that the Greens cannot support any future farm support system or farming policy that does not address climate change as a core principle. Our position has not changed on that matter.

I lodged an amendment to the motion for debate in January, calling for agriculture to play a key role in addressing the climate emergency that we face and for farming support payments to be used to develop a net zero emissions sector in Scotland. The cabinet secretary failed to speak to my amendment once in that debate, so I am still unsure why the Government voted against it, but an explanation from him of why the Government is so opposed to climate change mitigation forming a core principle of our farm support system would be welcome today.

I know that I am not alone in my frustration about that. This week, the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee published our stage 1 report on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, which included the following observation:

“the area where divergence from UK Committee on Climate Change advice is most apparent is in relation to agriculture policy. In this case”—

the most recent climate change plan—

“the CCC recommended an approach which was subsequently rejected by the Scottish Government without an explanation provided to justify the decision.”

Our report says that,

“In its most recent report ... the CCC again noted: ‘Not all our recommendations have been implemented. In the agriculture sector, ambitions for emissions reduction have been further scaled back from the draft Plan.’”

The body that was established specifically to advise Government on its climate change plan has made it clear that we are going in the wrong direction and ignoring its advice.

Our report on the bill goes on to recommend that

“the Scottish Government give urgent consideration to the agriculture sector ... and take a holistic approach to

emissions accounting, recognising the activities across the sector that play a positive role in reducing emissions, such as afforestation and peatland restoration, and highlighting the opportunities that can arise by developing new rural support mechanisms that encourage this.”

I am looking at John Scott, who will recognise those words—he is nodding sagely in the corner.

That recommendation from a Parliament committee makes it clear that we are not, as some would accuse us, heaping undue blame for emissions on the agriculture sector. Agriculture is both a cause of and a solution to climate change emissions. By leaving out climate change from our discussions of agricultural support, we deny the fundamental role that the industry can play in mitigation and we shut off a potentially valuable source of funding for our farmers. We also deny the farming sector the chance for a just transition, which was discussed on a number of occasions in evidence to the committee. Agriculture was singled out for its vulnerability. A just transition will not come about by ignoring the difficult conversations.

We must recognise the wide range of approaches that are currently in the sector and ensure that we not only promote but financially support the best examples of low-carbon farming in Scotland. The answers are out there in the industry already—initiatives such as the nature friendly farming network, which was established by farmers themselves, are leading the way in low-carbon, sustainable farming, and I find it incomprehensible that they should not be rewarded for their approach to climate change in our future farm support system.

We are working towards a position in which most of us in the chamber agree to the public money for public goods approach to subsidies. What bigger public good is there than being part of the solution to climate change and helping Scotland to achieve net zero emissions?

16:25

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** I thank the Conservative Party for using its debating time today to raise the important issue of our rural economy. Unfortunately, although I am sure that Donald Cameron has the best of intentions, I believe that he fails to recognise what has to be the way forward for our rural economy. In the motion, he

“calls on the Scottish Government to set out its position regarding the main elements of a future support system for farming”.

No. If it did that, the Government would be ignoring what our Parliament decided on 10 January. Can you imagine the uproar in the chamber if the minister did that and decided to

ignore the will of Parliament? Parliament decided, in a vote after the debate on 10 January, that the Government's way forward would be

"to convene a group consisting of producer, consumer and environmental organisations to inform and recommend a new bespoke policy on farming and food production for Scotland".

That has to be the way forward if we are to design a new bespoke system of rural support that has buy-in from all our stakeholders.

Indeed, the Government's amendment today would have contained a reference to that commitment but, unfortunately, the Presiding Officer decided not to call the amendment that I lodged to the Government's amendment, so we do not have an opportunity to vote to reconfirm Parliament's and the Scottish Government's commitment. I do not question the Presiding Officer's decision. Perhaps I am assuming something, but he may have felt that Parliament did not need a vote to reconfirm what it had already decided, and I absolutely accept that. I am sure that, during his summing up, the cabinet secretary will update us on the work that he has been doing to establish that group, so that we can see that work is under way to recommend a bespoke system that will work for Scotland.

I do not wish to be unkind to Donald Cameron, but the Conservative call for the Government to outline the new system that we need is, if I may say so, a typically paternalistic approach. The Conservatives seem to want the Government to tell our producers, consumers and environmental organisations that the Government always knows best. Ignoring buy-in from our producer, consumer and environmental stakeholders, which is what we would do if we went down the route that Donald Cameron wants us to, is a recipe for failure, and that is why the call from the Conservatives must be resisted once again. Donald Cameron tried that approach during the debate on 10 January, and Parliament said no. Unfortunately, Donald Cameron repeatedly misses the point and he is back again with very much the same motion.

We will support the Labour amendment, but we must be careful not to pre-empt the work of the producer, consumer and environmental organisations that form the new group. As I said in the debate on 10 January,

"in designing a new and bespoke system of support for our rural economy that works, the rural economy secretary has a difficult task ahead of him"—

it is not going to be easy—

"and we must all make the extra effort not to create false divisions between us",

which is what I think is happening,

"simply for party advantage."—[*Official Report*, 10 January 2019; c 74-5.]

Even now, I call on the Conservatives to engage with that inclusive approach because, as I said in the debate in January and it is worth repeating:

"The great prize is a bespoke and successful system of rural support that will enable our rural economy"

to overcome the real challenges that it faces and

"to thrive." —[*Official Report*, 10 January 2019; c 74.]

Surely that is what we all want to see.

**The Presiding Officer:** We turn to the open part of the debate.

16:29

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests, which shows that I am a partner in a farming business. As someone who has a farm and comes from a family that has farmed for three generations, and who has spent 12 years of their professional life offering advice to farmers, I believe that it is right that I have strong and informed views on farming.

Farming is a long-term business that does not always mirror the patterns of normal business or the Parliament's election cycles. Farmers have to plan 10 years in advance to ensure that the huge capital costs that they require to pay are well invested. Preparing for the future is everything, and being able to predict the future is all important.

Cabinet secretary, that is why farmers up and down the country are getting more and more frustrated with your lack of forward planning and a long-term vision for Scottish farming. You always point to your "Stability and Simplicity" document, which I believe you waved earlier. My question to you is this: what workable, comprehensive plan contains 46 questions? When I worked as a surveyor in private practice, if I had gone to my boss and said, "Here is a plan with 46 questions in it," I do not think that he would have given me a fair hearing. I believe that the document is quite simple in what it says, but it offers no certainty and no vision for the future. Farmers are not seeing enough progress, and the Scottish Conservatives now call on the Scottish Government to get on with it. Too much analysis often leads to paralysis.

First, let us look at productivity, which has already been mentioned. For far too long, productivity on Scottish farms has plateaued. Barley yields per acre have hardly increased in 20 years. We need to be far more progressive in our use of new technology, from using smarter digital technology to boost crop yields to investigating how we can improve resilience through plant and animal breeding.

Secondly, with the new system that is being developed we now have an opportunity to

recognise the differences between the Lowlands and the Highlands, and future policy must do so. Clearly, there is a difference between the productivity of the alluvial coastal and riverine plains and that of the pioneer habitats on the upper slopes of our hills. As we have seen in the past, one policy never suits all. We must ensure that we lay out what we want each of Scotland's habitats to achieve.

Thirdly, we believe that farmers are the custodians of the countryside. We all benefit from the landscape that our farmers maintain and have produced over hundreds of years. Scottish Conservatives feel that the principle of public money being used for public good must be at the heart of future funding.

Fourthly, the current funding system is far too complicated. Time and again, we have stressed that the penalties for errors are too stringent. Frankly, if the Government's agencies had been fined for their errors in delivering agricultural support in the same way that farmers have been in trying to receive it, they would be bankrupt. Here is an idea for you, cabinet secretary—you did ask for them: we could simplify the system by using the many assurance schemes that are currently in place to form the basis of information checking for farming. It would cost less, because farmers would be paying for it, it would be more efficient and it would perhaps result in a decrease in demand for the approximately 750 staff who are required to implement the current scheme.

Finally, we must secure future farming careers. I see that time is tight, but I want to make this comment. On land reform, I believe that we have got to the point at which, because of the legislation, we are not seeing new tenancies being created. We also have older farmers, less land to rent, lower incomes for farmers, and greater reliance on subsidies—all of which point to failure.

Farmers have been left in the dark for too long by this cabinet secretary, who is playing politics with them as he uses Brexit to delay introducing a Scottish agriculture bill or signing up to the UK Parliament's Agriculture Bill. Cabinet secretary, it is time for you to stop sitting on the fence. Farmers do not want or need you there—they want you to back Scottish farming and come up with a plan, which you have fundamentally failed to do.

**The Presiding Officer:** I encourage members to speak through the chair and not to use the term “you” in their speeches.

16:34

**Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP):** Crofting is a major part of the fabric of life in my constituency. The Western Isles are home to approximately one third of all Scotland's crofts,

with more than 6,000 island crofts spread out among nearly 300 townships. Crofting is closely connected to the way of life, the culture and even the language of the islands that I represent.

The future of crofting faces some very real challenges. The age profile of crofters is higher than the rest of the population, and there remains a difficulty in attracting new entrants, which is not helped by the occasional casually dismissive remark that crofters are “people who have a couple of sheep and a back garden”—a quote that I am sad to say is directly attributable to members on the Opposition benches.

The high levels of bureaucracy that are associated with crofting are a source of constant frustration, with a recent survey showing that 95 per cent of crofters do not see crofting as economically viable unless they supplement their income in other ways. It is therefore worth mentioning the importance of the less favoured area support scheme to my constituency, and I thank the cabinet secretary for his commitment to finding a solution that will deliver funding under LFASS at approximately 100 per cent for this year and the next two years of the scheme.

I like and respect Mr Cameron, not least for his knowledge of the subject under debate, but, in my view, today's motion fails to take account of one other thing that is making crofters anxious. When people in my constituency say “S e bùrach a th' ann!” or “S e brochan a th' ann!”—or worse—they are talking about Brexit and the catastrophe that is the UK Government's handling of it. Some members have decided that the issue should not be brought into this debate, but it has added huge new uncertainties for crofting. According to a survey of crofters that was conducted in November by the Scottish Crofting Federation, 14 per cent of respondents were confident about the future, compared with 31 per cent who classified themselves as despondent, while 55 per cent of respondents were uncertain, citing Brexit and the potential knock-on effects on prices and support payments.

We can only marvel at the blame-shifting exercise that is under way in the Conservative Party's motion. We are now only 23 days from Brexit, but we still do not know what kind of Brexit we are facing, what markets producers will be able to sell into, the rules that will govern them, whether their exports will face high tariffs or what kind of customs checks they might expect to face. However, having dragged—in Scotland's case, the more appropriate word might be “shoved”—us on to the cliff edge of a disastrous hard Brexit, the Tories have the sheer brass neck to turn around and say that it is uncertainty from the Scottish Government that is having a detrimental impact on farmers and crofters. There is a large body of

evidence that shows that Scotland's agriculture sector would be worse off under every conceivable Brexit scenario, and I ask the members opposite who so casually dismiss those concerns to support calls from members on the SNP benches for the UK Government to guarantee that farmers and crofters will be compensated in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** Will the member give way?

**Dr Allan:** Yes.

**The Presiding Officer:** Please be very brief, Mr Kerr.

**Liam Kerr:** Surely all the uncertainty could be taken away if the SNP voted for the withdrawal agreement.

**Dr Allan:** I hesitate to remind the member that at present his own party is not showing any sign of voting for its own deal. That remark is representative of the species of foolishness that I have been talking about.

I have focused on some of the risks of Brexit to crofting, not because they are the only threats to crofting—far from it; I could happily, but will not, spend an afternoon berating greylag geese—because they are, at the latest reckoning, some 561 hours away.

16:38

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** Providing the right support for agriculture and rural communities in the wake of Brexit is essential, not just for the sector and the communities that depend on it, but for Scotland's economy as a whole. Agriculture is a vital source of employment and income in our rural areas and the foundation of a food and drink sector that is worth billions of pounds and countless jobs across Scotland. However, it is also one of the sectors that is most at risk from the utter chaos of the current Brexit process.

During this time of uncertainty, we need the UK Government to take a no-deal Brexit off the table, but we also need more direction, detail and clarity from the Scottish Government on its long-term vision for a future for agriculture that goes beyond five years and which brings together the many key stakeholders in the sector.

The last time that we debated this topic in the chamber, the cabinet secretary, after pressure from Opposition parties, agreed to convene a group that would develop a new policy in detail. As yet, however, we have little progress on the matter. The minister mentioned that commitment again today, but she still provided no detail. Given the urgency of the matter and the scale of the

work that the group is to undertake, the lack of progress is a deep concern. I accept that there are challenges caused by the continued uncertainty about long-term funding from the UK Government and I share the Scottish Government's frustration on that point, but I do not accept that that is an excuse to delay the development, in partnership with stakeholders, of far more detailed proposals for a Scottish system. We should be making the case for the level of funding that we need and putting forward credible and detailed plans that show what a new Scottish system could look like in the long term.

That system needs to incorporate the principles that are outlined in the motion of

"productivity, regional differentiation, environmental protection, simplification and research and education".

A great deal of agreement exists on those principles across a range of stakeholders.

There is also widespread recognition of the need to do more to support environmental sustainability in the sector, taking into account factors such as emissions, biodiversity and air and soil quality. Likewise, it is broadly agreed that payments should be set up in a way that better fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism in the sector by making funding available for measures that are intended to increase productivity and resilience.

**Edward Mountain:** In the member's vision for the future, does he foresee a reduction in the £50 million a year that it costs to administer the current scheme?

**Colin Smyth:** I certainly hope that that will be the case. It is interesting that the figure has actually risen in the most recent budget, which is a matter of concern.

We also need reforms to support a more equitable distribution of the funding that is available, irrespective of the cost of running the system. The current emphasis on direct payments provides large and often wealthy landowners with significant sums of money, while 45 per cent of farms generate income that works out at below the minimum agriculture wage. Funding needs to be allocated more fairly and according to the principle of public good for public money. It should promote inclusive growth and a wide range of social benefits as well as economic and environmental ones.

Support needs to be in place to compensate for natural disadvantages such as biophysical constraints and remoteness. LFASS is currently a lifeline for many farmers and crofters, and the cabinet secretary must not only guarantee protection against the upcoming 60 per cent cut

but make it clear that there will be a source of support of that kind in the long term.

Our future support system should also be used to improve support for animal welfare by, for example, better incentivising those who make the choice to keep calves and cows together for longer and by supporting the rearing of male dairy calves instead of exporting them. There is growing concern that the live export of animals for fattening and slaughter does nothing to positively promote Scottish agriculture. We should bring that practice to an end; otherwise, the Government's claims to support the production of meat close to where animals are born and reared are worthless.

There needs to be a clear commitment to a replacement for LEADER funding. Crucially, our new agricultural support system must also work to tackle the scandal of food poverty in Scotland. It is an absolute disgrace that, in a country with a world-class food and drink sector, children still go to bed hungry. The new agricultural support system must help the sector to fulfil people's basic human right to food, and I once again call on the Scottish Government to enshrine that right in law.

16:43

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** Today's debate on this Tory motion feels a bit like groundhog day. I wonder whether members remember this:

"That the Parliament acknowledges that future policy for Scotland's rural economy should be founded on key principles, including sustainability, simplicity, innovation, inclusion, productivity and profitability".

That is very similar to the motion that we are debating today, but it is from a motion that was lodged by the Scottish Government and that was debated on 10 January. The motion included a proposal from the Liberal Democrats, which Mike Rumbles spoke about,

"to convene a group consisting of producer, consumer and environmental organisations".

We debated that proposal at length, but the Tories voted against it.

The cabinet secretary, Fergus Ewing, opened that debate by saying:

"We are 78 days from Brexit, yet we still do not know what sort of Brexit we face. What is clear is that none of the Brexit options is good for Scotland's rural economy—all are problematic for sectors such as farming, food and drink, aquaculture, forestry and fisheries."—[*Official Report*, 10 January 2019; c 59.]

As has been said, we are now only 23 days away from Brexit and it is very clear that nothing has changed. Everyone in this chamber, whether or not they admit it, knows that the real and present threat to the rural economy—the real detrimental effect—is not some perceived inertia from the

Scottish Government. The biggest threat to every sector in Scotland, including the rural economy, is being taken out of the European Union.

Brexit will damage UK agriculture, regardless of whether we come out with no deal or Theresa May's bad deal. Our farmers have no certainty that they will have access to the European market at the end of this month. UK sheep meat exports, nearly 90 per cent of which are destined for the European market, are worth £390 million a year, and sheep farmers now face the prospect of tariffs as high as 45 to 50 per cent being forced on them. It is devastating.

Our celebrated food and drink sector, which Colin Smyth mentioned, estimates that having no deal could lead to the loss of £2 billion in sales—an estimate that is based on the UK Government's economic projections. Fresh, chilled and perishable products including our seafood, red meat, poultry, fruit, vegetables and dairy, which attract a premium for their quality and freshness, could be delayed and spoiled due to extended customs checks.

Our red meat industry faces obliteration in the current export market due to punitive tariffs, and the problem will be exacerbated if the UK adopts a policy of low or no tariffs or checks on equivalent imports, which, ultimately, could flood the market.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member give way?

**Gail Ross:** I am sorry, but I do not have time.

What will happen to our precious protected geographical indication status?

NFU Scotland said, in its discussion paper "A New Agricultural Policy For Scotland Post-Brexit":

"Change is inevitable, but change must be managed and not chaotic."

However, all that we see from Westminster on Brexit is chaos.

We want to, and will, do things differently in Scotland. The Scottish Government has said that it is working on plans for future support. The cabinet secretary made a statement in the chamber recently that outlined our plans, and the minister laid out our position in her opening speech. Future support must be simplified—we all agree on that. It should support the whole of our countryside and the environment. It should reward good practice, productivity and stewardship of the land. It should also take account of carbon impact and biodiversity. Above all, it must be fair. It must support communities and work for everyone.

It is just not true that we are sitting back and doing nothing.

16:47

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** I declare an interest as a farmer, food producer and member of NFUS.

I welcome Donald Cameron's motion, but, before I talk about its content, I will put to the cabinet secretary the spectre, which was raised by last week's *The Sunday Times* and by Gail Ross, of 9 million lambs in the UK being unsaleable into the EU market this year with or without a Brexit deal, with sheep farmers facing potential losses of about £100 per head. What plans does the cabinet secretary have to deal with that problem on behalf of the many sheep farmers in Scotland? I urge him to vote for the deal.

**Fergus Ewing:** Ask Boris Johnson—

**John Scott:** I am asking that question of the cabinet secretary, who is commenting from a sedentary position. I wish that he would keep quiet. However, he is illustrating the point that I want to make.

While we are discussing the future shape of rural Scotland, the much bigger question is how many working farmers there will be in our landscape in the future. NFUS has declared its vision of "actively farmed hectares", but landscapes require people in them to make them work, and too many livestock farmers cannot make a living that is sufficient to allow them to continue farming or environmentally enhancing our countryside. That is demonstrated by this year's total income from farming figures—historic TIFF figures, I would say—which might come as a surprise to Mairi Gougeon and Gail Ross. That is happening now, before Brexit.

The Government continues to make life harder for the people who are trying to make a living. This week, it laid a statutory instrument to introduce beavers as part of its project to create wilderness landscapes in Scotland. Sea eagle introduction, red kite introduction and now beaver introduction are all active choices that are supported by the Scottish Government, all of which have a cumulative impact on the viability of our agricultural sector.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**John Scott:** No, I am afraid that I will not. I am sorry.

Land abandonment is a current and real threat that could create wilderness on a scale not seen since the 18th century as well as causing rural depopulation and the loss of the people who have the skills to produce and maintain the working and managed landscapes that we currently enjoy.

In addition, computers that do not work have taken another £200 million out of Scottish farmers' pockets. Rural payment schemes that reduce or delay cash flows do not really help, and reducing LFASS payments just makes a bad situation worse.

I know that the cabinet secretary is doing his best to support farmers, but those are some of the day-to-day obstacles that need to be overcome just to put food on the table, before we even start considering where we are headed.

Of course, we need increased productivity, but productivity cannot be achieved without profitability. Again, I refer the cabinet secretary to the TIFF figures. Of course we need environmental protections and enhancement in the delivery of public goods and climate change mitigation, but not if the delivery of those public goods helps to put farmers out of business.

Simplification is long overdue, and the new support scheme that is proposed under new Scottish legislation should seek to achieve that. Perhaps we should take a leaf from the Irish Government's book on how to create a simplified system.

Education and knowledge transfer are also vital if our heirs and successors are to be equipped in the use of more sophisticated food production techniques at the same time as delivering on further greenhouse gas reduction targets. I hope that the cabinet secretary and Mark Ruskell agree that being the world leader in climate change mitigation targets is not worth it if that means driving farmers and food producers out of Scotland and forcing us to buy more of our food from other countries in the world to replace lost production in Scotland.

The huge success of Scotland's food and drink sector cannot be continued or sustained without the raw materials to do so, but the levels of those raw materials are constantly reducing, particularly in the livestock sector. We will get to a point at which we will have difficulty in sustaining the idea that the end product is derived from produce that is grown in Scotland.

The cabinet secretary knows how important having people in our countryside is, and he knows how important LFASS payments are to the 85 per cent of Scotland that is classified as less favoured areas. That is why existing payment rates must be sustained. I commend Donald Cameron's motion.

16:52

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I will respond to a couple of issues that have come up in the debate. I share John Scott's concern about the Tayside beavers. There

are now 550 of them, descended from what we must remind ourselves were illegally released, or perhaps escaped, beavers. The Government is picking up the tab for someone else's illegal activity and I wish that we did not need to do that.

I want to pursue Mark Ruskell's point on climate change. To a certain extent, John Scott and I will make common cause on the issue. Mark Ruskell asked for a net zero farming sector. Moving the whole of our environment to net zero could damage the climate change agenda. It would be perfectly easy to move the human race to net zero emissions: remove all humans from the surface of the planet and it would be achieved overnight. Of course, that is not what we will do, but people who ask for net zero in farming are making a similar suggestion.

**Mark Ruskell:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Stewart Stevenson:** Forgive me, but I do not have time. I am watching the clock.

The point is that we want to have net zero as measured across all our sectors, but not in every sector. We should spend the pounds that will get us to net zero where they will be most effective.

We must remember that farmers do not get enough credit for the efforts that they are making. For example, the work that is done in forestry is not attributed to the farming sector. There are now days when all of our electricity comes from wind farms. Where are the wind farms? By and large, they are on agricultural farms, but, in the numbers that we have, not a single part of the climate change benefit is attributed to farmers.

The bottom line is that we need to spend the money on climate change mitigation and reduction in the most cost-effective way. If putting the money into farming will lead to the greatest reduction in emissions for every pound spent, we should do that. However, if, as is more likely, greater reductions will come from putting the money into insulating houses and decarbonising our transport sector, that is where we should put it.

If, for doctrinaire reasons, we decide to put it into farming, where it may not give us the greatest bang for our buck, we would damage our ability to reach net zero overall. We need to be very cautious about those—forgive me, Mr Ruskell—simplistic views of a complex issue.

**Mark Ruskell** rose—

**Stewart Stevenson:** I have one minute to go, so forgive me, Mr Ruskell—we will have a chat afterwards. [*Laughter.*]

I come back to the core issue of farming and support for it, which is at the heart of the motion that we are debating. I found Mr Cameron's, and

indeed Mr Mountain's, remarks baffling, considering what the NFUS briefing to us says.

"It is the view of NFUS that 'Stability and Simplicity' " —the Government document—

"effectively captured the recommendations from various expert groups appointed by ... Government in recent years."

It is saying that "Stability and Simplicity" has been a pretty good thing. It is not giving uncritical and absolute support, and I would never expect that from farmers. It also says:

"It is the view of NFUS that if the 'Steps to Change' approach were to be adopted,"

much of what

"is required by way of future support for Scottish agriculture could be delivered with greater efficiency—in terms of funding, process and outcomes."

The farmers have got the message; they know where we need to go and I look forward to continuing to engage with farmers in my constituency and across Scotland on the many occasions that present themselves. Indeed, I hope that at this year's Turriff show I will once again sit next to Mr Gove. I hope that he will be able to account for what the UK Government will have done in the period from 29 March—but I am not holding my breath.

16:56

**Rhoda Grant:** The debate has improved with time, thankfully, and I hope that it has given the cabinet secretary some food for thought.

A number of speakers have questioned our amendment and why we have tackled food poverty and rural poverty in a debate about farming. I repeat that 45 per cent of farms make an income of less than the minimum agricultural wage and 23 per cent operate at a loss—that cannot be anything other than poverty. If we are looking at schemes going forward, we will need to tackle that. It is simply wrong that some people make huge amounts of money out of the support that is available but the 45 per cent who really need that help are not getting it. If we are devising a new scheme, we need to make sure that the support goes to the right people.

The same applies to food production and food poverty. At the moment, we are not paying some producers enough, yet food is not affordable to our population. Those things are inextricably linked. When we look at support, we need to make sure that we make those links and ensure that the industry—and the support that we put into it—deals with those issues. Colin Smyth said that we should enshrine a human right to food, and I believe that we should do that. If we do, it will inform our policy. That is the mainstay of our

amendment, and I hope that people will support it, because it is incredibly important.

A number of speakers—Mark Ruskell, Colin Smyth and Stewart Stevenson—spoke about farming and the environment. It is a big issue and the move to net zero has been looked at by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. Mitigation has come up in the debate. The farming sector mitigates a huge amount of carbon and it is not given credit for that. Although we look at farming sector outputs, nobody looks at what the sector is sequestering. We need to do that to encourage more farmers to take carbon sequestration on board, and we need to reward them for their work. Any new scheme in that direction must not be competitive; I have heard so many people say that they cannot qualify for environmental schemes because they are competitive and a small farm cannot compete with a large farm and tick the same boxes.

John Scott said that net zero may force people out of business. We need to talk about that now, because we need a just transition, so that we do not force people out of business but make sure that support is available. We already have too many air miles for our food; we need local producers and local procurement so that we cut food air miles and carbon.

Needless to say, the debate has focused a great deal on Brexit, which is not surprising. Mairi Gougeon talked about the other rural funding, LEADER, and said that we have no idea what will be in place going forward. It would be good if the Scottish Government considered what it would prioritise in those schemes. The EU prioritises peripherality and we need our Governments to look at those issues. Yes, they may be waiting to hear whether they have the money, but we need to ensure that the direction of travel is there and that people know what they can expect from future policy.

As Colin Smyth said, having no deal would be a disaster. However, the backstop would also be a disaster for farming, because it includes fish and agriculture and tariffs would become payable. That would therefore not improve the situation either.

In conclusion, Presiding Officer—I can see that you are looking at me—Edward Mountain talked about land reform, the lack of tenancies and the need to stop land reform. I argue that that is a reason to push ahead with land reform, because, if those who are managing the land cannot provide the tenancies, we need to put the land in the hands of those who would manage it for the many, not the few.

17:01

**The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing):** I am pleased that we, as the Scottish Government, set out last summer in our document “Stability and Simplicity: proposals for rural funding transition period” proposals for a rural funding transition period of five years. That was a consultation document, and we listened carefully to the responses that we received, which were largely positive and supportive. We have now, therefore, set out a clear five-year plan that we believe will see the industry through the transition following the UK’s exit from the EU—if it takes place. I am delighted that we have had a positive response to that plan.

I respect many of the farmers who sit in this Parliament, and I always listen carefully to their advice. I agree with much of what John Scott, for example, has to say about improvements in farming practice. Sadly, I do not have enough time to answer—as I would like to—all the individual points that have been made.

If I may, I will get to the nub of things, which is this: in a debate just a few weeks ago, Parliament agreed to take a certain path, and it did so by an overwhelming majority. I think that it had the support of everyone except the Conservatives—although, if anyone in the other Opposition parties did not support me, please correct me. Everybody said that we should proceed on the basis of the principles that we had set out in the motion for debate—with an amendment from Mr Rumbles that I was happy to accept—namely, that we appoint a group of people to guide us and to provide advice on the way ahead and the long-term future after the five-year period is over.

Parliament instructed me to proceed in that way and I, of course, respect the will of Parliament. Indeed, I imagine that were I not to respect it, the Conservatives would be the first people to criticise me for ignoring the will of Parliament. I intend to do what Parliament asked me to do. I am happy to respond to the specific request that Mr Rumbles made and confirm that we are making good progress towards selecting a group of people using consideration of the particular wording of the amendment. I am happy to say that I will announce the composition of the group in due course, and as soon as we can. There are practical matters about appointing people to serve on groups—we must ensure that they are available and ready to do it, which takes a little time.

I am proud that we have set out our five-year plan. However, I asked one question of the Conservatives at the beginning of the debate. It was this: what is the Scottish Conservatives’ policy not just specifically on future funding for agriculture, but for rural areas as a whole? As far



as I know, other than some abstract nouns and some desirable sentiments, there is no policy whatsoever. It might be—although no Conservative member mentioned this—that they support the vague proposals that were set out in Michael Gove’s “Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit” paper. However, they have not said that, and I think that I know why. It is because Michael Gove proposes that all direct payments to farmers cease by 2027, in eight years.

I am happy to accept clarification from Mr Cameron. Do you support that or not?

**Donald Cameron:** First, it is your responsibility to set out what your policy is for your Government. Secondly, if you read our document, you will see that we support continuation of direct payments for farmers.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Speak through the chair, please.

**Fergus Ewing:** Let me offer some advice to Mr Cameron. I have been giving advice for 40 years as a solicitor and as a member of the Scottish Parliament. There will be a time when the Conservatives need to start to develop policies of their own and stop the endless negativity, carping and bickering. They will get absolutely nowhere by pursuing their current approach. That does not cause me too much grief, but there we are. I have not even asked for payment for that advice; I have given it freely.

I guess that I do not have much time left, Presiding Officer.

I find it quite staggering that the Conservatives should have brought the motion to Parliament for debate. However, I will ignore it in one sense, because my job is to do my best for Scottish farmers. I am determined to do that, and it is one of the things that I do every single day.

I am pleased to inform members that we have, in the past few days, issued 10,600 offers of loans to LFASS recipients, and we intend to make payments to those who return acceptances as soon as possible—preferably before 29 March.

We will do our job for Scottish farmers. The tragedy is that the Scottish Conservatives, either through cowardice or through their duty to obey Mrs May—we heard about that yesterday—have said absolutely nothing about Brexit, and appear to be quite ready to see Scotland go over the no-deal precipice. The rest of Parliament believes that that is a profound and grievous error.

The Scottish Conservatives’ approach is feckless and reckless, and they have nothing positive to say. Perhaps a period of prolonged silence for a week or so would be their best course of action.

17:07

**Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** I declare an interest as a partner in a farming business.

The debate has allowed us to have an important conversation about the future direction of travel for Scottish agriculture. I have always said that the great prize that Brexit offers is the opportunity to design a system of support that is better suited to the needs of Scottish agriculture, and to move away from the outdated CAP system, which has simply not worked for our farmers for many years.

Although I am glad that we are having the debate, it is unfortunate that Conservative members had to initiate it. Despite constant requests from everyone in Parliament and the farming community for certainty on the future direction, we know only that the Scottish Government intends to carry on with little change to the CAP rules until 2024. That is very disappointing: that is far too long a lead-in to changes that can, and should, be made much more quickly.

NFU Scotland has said that “Brexit is a golden opportunity” for change. Today, we have published our plans, which I commend to everyone in the chamber. My colleagues have explained some of those plans, but it appears that the cabinet secretary has not been listening.

Nevertheless, I am glad to hear that we all agree that a farmer’s first priority is to produce the high-quality food that we all enjoy. Efficient food production must be built on strong environmental and animal welfare standards, so it is important that a suite of environmental measures that all farmers can join be put in place. Payments should be made for environmental outcomes that are simple to apply for, simple to implement and easily measured.

I have always been vocal about my support for the Scottish Government’s target to grow the value of our food and drink industry to £30 billion by 2030. However, to double that industry, we must support and sustain the growth of our agriculture sector and the farmers who grow the raw materials from which our award-winning and world-renowned products are made.

I had hoped that the debate would be a positive one, but Mairi Gougeon went straight into the usual SNP grief, grievance and scaremongering mode about a no-deal Brexit. Let me spell out to her and to all SNP members here that the simple way to avoid no deal is to vote for the deal. They should listen to NFU Scotland and the National Farmers Union in England and Wales, and they should listen to business. They want a deal that will give us certainty and tariff-free access to EU markets, and allow our lamb to flow into Europe.

The hypocrisy from the SNP is breathtaking. Mairi Gougeon also said that there is no certainty about funding. The UK Government has guaranteed support payments until 2022: that is more certainty than farmers in the EU have, given that our contribution to the EU will cease and support for agriculture is likely to fall as a result.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Will Peter Chapman take an intervention?

**Peter Chapman:** I have no time.

In his speech, Mark Ruskell spoke only about climate change. Farmers are a major part of the solution to climate change, rather than the problem. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Hang on, Mr Chapman. I ask members to keep it down—Mr Stevenson, in particular.

**Peter Chapman:** Our document explains that we would encourage carbon sequestration and tree planting. We will support peat restoration, more efficient use of inputs through targeted inputs, and efficient livestock production. I thank Stewart Stevenson for his contribution to that part of the debate.

Mark Ruskell asked what greater public good is there than addressing climate change. The answer is this: feeding our population.

Alasdair Allan spoke about the importance of LFASS and funding for crofting. We fully agree, which is why we talk about it at length in our document and say that it should remain.

I remind Gail Ross that there are challenges from Brexit, but also opportunities. However, we must leave with a deal. We can and will leave with a deal, and SNP MPs could help that to happen. Will they vote for it? They will not, because they want a failed Brexit. They want chaos to drive independence.

To close, I make it clear that whatever future policy the Government eventually adopts, I hope that today's debate has given it some ideas and that it will come forward soon with new ideas for continued support for the industry.

Let me quote a worrying statistic: last year 82 per cent of farming profits came from support payments. That has nothing to do with Brexit. It has happened on the Government's watch, before Brexit even happens. That staggering figure shows how important it is for the Government—both here and in Westminster—to provide farmers with certainty on future farm support and how it will be delivered.

In the middle of February, the Scottish Government announced the creation of another new group to drive forward the recommendations

of the National Council of Rural Advisers. I have lost count of the number of advisory groups and consultations on future policy that the Government has formed, yet there is still no clear idea of its desired key principles and structure.

Today, the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party has published our desired key principles to drive future agricultural policy. We do not have a team of civil servants to crunch the numbers and come up with detailed policies. The Government does, so it is time that it stopped kicking the can down the road and gave the industry a degree of certainty, which it not only needs in order to plan ahead, but deserves.

I support the motion that is in the name of Donald Cameron.

## Business Motions

17:14

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-16150, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 12 March 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Managing Scotland's Fisheries in the Future

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Fair Work Action Plan

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 13 March 2019

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity; Justice and the Law Officers

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Year of Young People 2018: A Celebration, a Chance and a Change

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 14 March 2019

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Government Business and Constitutional Relations

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Update on the Impact of Brexit on the Scottish Further and Higher Education Sectors

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Building

on Scotland's Strengths in Technology and Engineering to Become Europe's Leading Space Nation

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 19 March 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Damages (Investment Returns and Periodical Payments) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 20 March 2019

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Culture, Tourism and External Affairs; Education and Skills

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 21 March 2019

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport

*followed by* Scottish Government Business

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, in relation to any debate on a business motion setting out a business programme taken on Wednesday 13 March 2019, the second sentence of rule 8.11.3 is suspended and replaced with "Any Member may speak on the motion at the discretion of the Presiding Officer";

(c) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on Thursday 14 March 2019, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders or their representatives to question the First Minister"; and

(d) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 11 March 2019, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[Graeme Dey]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motions S5M-16151 and S5M-16152, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on the stage 2 timetables for two bills.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 3 May 2019.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 22 March 2019.—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motions agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:14

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of eight Parliamentary Bureau motions: S5M-16153 to S5M-16159, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments; and S5M-16160 on a committee meeting at the same time as Parliament.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Asset Transfer Request (Designation of Relevant Authority) (Scotland) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Years Assistance (Best Start Grants) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 1) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Years Assistance (Best Start Grants) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Funeral Expense Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Insolvency (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the INSPIRE (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Equalities and Human Rights Committee can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament from 1.00pm to 1.45pm on Thursday 21 March 2019 for the purpose of taking evidence from Robert E Larzelere PhD, Professor of Parenting Research, Oklahoma State University, on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill.—[*Graeme Dey*]

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

## Decision Time

17:15

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** I remind members that, if the amendment in the name of John Swinney is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Iain Gray will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-16122.2, in the name of John Swinney, which seeks to amend motion S5M-16122, in the name of Alison Harris, on early years, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)

Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

### Against

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 57, Against 58, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-16122.1, in the name of Iain Gray, which seeks to amend motion S5M-16122, in the name of Alison Harris, on early years, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)

Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caitness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 57, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-16122, in the name of Alison Harris, on early years, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 57, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament is committed to the delivery of 1,140 hours of funded childcare for all three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds by August 2020; recognises the growing concerns that are being expressed by private,

voluntary and independent (PVI) providers with regard to the implementation of this policy; believes, in light of the most recent evidence from PVI sector providers, some of whom have chosen to end their partnerships with local authorities altogether, that the problems have not yet been addressed; acknowledges the financial pressures faced by councils in delivering local services, and calls on the Scottish Ministers to take urgent action to address these flaws in implementation.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-16123.2, in the name of Mairi Gougeon, which seeks to amend motion S5M-16123, in the name of Donald Cameron, on supporting Scottish agriculture, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)

Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)



**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 82, Against 33, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-16123.1, in the name of Rhoda Grant, which seeks to amend motion S5M-16123, in the name of Donald Cameron, on supporting Scottish agriculture, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)

Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**Against**

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 88, Against 27, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-16123, in the name of Donald Cameron, on supporting Scottish agriculture, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse)

(SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**Against**

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 82, Against 33, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament believes that the principles that it agreed following the debate on motion S5M-15279 on 10 January 2019 should be at the heart of future rural policy, namely sustainability, simplicity, innovation, inclusion, productivity and profitability; recognises the significant role that research and education should play to secure future careers in rural industries; reaffirms its view that a no deal

outcome to the current negotiations on EU withdrawal would be completely unacceptable, not least because of its potential disastrous impact on Scotland's rural economy, and agrees that, as well as supporting Scotland's farming and crofting sector, a future funding system should also support rural, coastal and island community activity and promote environmental stewardship, and notes that any future system of rural payments should have inclusion as a principle, prioritise payments for those most in need, tackle rural and food poverty, and support repopulation in rural areas.

**The Presiding Officer:** I propose to ask a single question on the eight Parliamentary Bureau motions, if no member objects. The question is, that motions S5M-16153 to S5M-16160, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Asset Transfer Request (Designation of Relevant Authority) (Scotland) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Years Assistance (Best Start Grants) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 1) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Early Years Assistance (Best Start Grants) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Funeral Expense Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Insolvency (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the INSPIRE (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Equalities and Human Rights Committee can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament from 1.00pm to 1.45pm on Thursday 21 March 2019 for the purpose of taking evidence from Robert E Larzelere PhD, Professor of Parenting Research, Oklahoma State University, on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill.

## Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-15292, in the name of Gordon MacDonald, on Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal. The debate will be led by Emma Harper, on Gordon MacDonald's behalf, and will be concluded without any question being put.

I welcome everyone to the public gallery. I know what all you Marie Curie volunteers are like, so I say right at the start of the debate that we will have no clapping, heckling or anything else. There will be time at the end of the debate to show any appreciation.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament welcomes Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal, which runs throughout each March; notes that 2019 marks the appeal's 33rd year; commends the care and support that Marie Curie provides to over 8,600 people and their families every year in Scotland in their own homes, across 31 local authorities and in the charity's hospices in Edinburgh and Glasgow; praises its information and support services, which are available for everyone affected by a terminal illness, and its volunteer helper services, which provide emotional support, companionship and information to people, carers and families; recognises the dedication, hard work and contribution of the charity's volunteers across Scotland, including the 421 volunteers across the Lothians, who raise funds and awareness during the appeal and throughout the year to support its vital services; believes that there is a story behind every daffodil pin, with people donating and wearing them to remember someone who has died or to show support for Marie Curie's services; understands that some people who need palliative care toward the end of life are still missing out, especially people with terminal conditions other than cancer; notes that the charity is highlighting that, every five minutes, someone in Scotland dies without getting the care and support they need at the end of their life; recognises that Marie Curie is working to change this and to improve the lives of all people living with a terminal illness, their carers and families; notes the view that wearing the daffodil pin unites millions of people together who believe dying people should get the care and support they deserve, and looks forward to as many people as possible supporting the annual appeal.

17:24

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to begin this important debate and raise awareness of Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal. I am speaking on behalf of a motion that was lodged by my friend and colleague Gordon MacDonald, who is unfortunately unable to be here this evening. I understand that more than 100 Marie Curie volunteers and staff from across Scotland are here tonight, including the charity's new chief executive, Matthew Reed. I am sure that colleagues across

the chamber will join me in welcoming them here to their Parliament. *[Applause.]*

I pay tribute to the Presiding Officer for the support that she has given Marie Curie over the past few years by leading members' business debates, raising awareness and hosting parliamentary events. I will be doing all those things this evening. By the way, the Presiding Officer told me that she was out on Saturday in her yellow top hat collecting for the appeal. I wish that I had been there to witness her sonsie face.

The great daffodil appeal is one of the most iconic and recognised fundraising drives of the year. People all over the country wear their yellow daffodil badges with a sense of pride that they are donating money to support Marie Curie to deliver its world-class palliative care services in our communities, its research, its campaigning and its information services.

Last year, Joan McAlpine and I hosted a great daffodil appeal blooming great tea party in our regional office to raise funds and awareness. Earlier this year, I joined the cross-party group on palliative care, which is convened by Bob Doris, so that I could learn more about what could be done.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** Now that the member has name-checked me, I have the opportunity to highlight the wonderful service that the Marie Curie hospice in Springburn provides across Glasgow. Does Emma Harper agree that the work and dedication of the Marie Curie community nurses are invaluable to the city of Glasgow, including in 2017-18, when they supported 569 people at home by making 5,459 visits to those who were in really difficult periods in their lives?

**Emma Harper:** I think that it is great that Bob Doris is in the chamber to support those of his Springburn constituents who are Marie Curie nurses and Springburn hospice workers. I thank him very much for being here.

The services that Marie Curie provides are possible only through the dedication of the many thousands of volunteers donning top hats and bibs, carrying collection buckets and braving the ever-unpredictable guid Scottish weather every March. The Scottish people are always incredibly generous, donating thousands of pounds every year. Whether the daffodil badge is worn in solidarity or in memory of a loved one, each tells a story. My story is contained in my 30 years as a nurse.

Last year, the daffodil appeal helped Marie Curie care for more than 8,600 people living with a terminal illness, as well as their family members, friends and carers. Marie Curie has a huge and irreplaceable impact on our communities at a time

that can be incredibly difficult and challenging for families.

I remind members that the organisation takes its name from the scientist Marie Curie, who twice won the Nobel prize for her research into radioactivity. Marie Curie agreed that her name could be used for a hospital, staffed by women, to care for and treat women with cancer. The hospital was destroyed by a bomb in 1944, which led to its re-establishment as the Marie Curie charity.

Marie Curie provides care for people with any terminal condition, whether that is cancer, organ failure, heart disease or frailty. Increasingly, people present with multiple conditions. Marie Curie provides care across Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. It delivers front-line care services in 31 local authorities in Scotland through nursing and hospice services. Its volunteer befriending service—the helper service—is reaching out into new areas and caring for more and more people with an information and support service, which supports more than 10,000 people a year UK-wide.

Marie Curie is also the biggest funder of palliative care research. With two research leads and more than 16 research projects in Scotland, much of that expertise and knowledge is generated right here.

I am proud that the Scottish Government has an ambitious vision for everyone who needs palliative care to have access to it by 2021. I wholeheartedly share that determination.

The Scottish Government's strategic framework for action on palliative and end-of-life care sets out that vision. It is outstanding to see that progress is already being made. That progress is supported by Marie Curie and others in the sector, and I look forward to hearing from the minister about the most recent and up-to-date progress that the Scottish Government and its partners have made.

We must acknowledge that, sadly, despite progress, some people are still missing out. In Scotland, around 43,000 people who die each year need palliative care, and estimates suggest that a quarter of those people miss out on some or all of the support that they need. We know that those dying with conditions other than terminal cancer—such as dementia, heart failure or frailty—are less likely to access palliative care. Older people, black, Asian and minority ethnic people, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex and those who come from our poorest communities are far less likely to get the care that they need when they are terminally ill and dying. We all agree that that is not acceptable, and I am pleased that it is being recognised and addressed by a Scottish

Government that is working for the people of Scotland.

The fact that Scotland has an ageing population is something to celebrate, but it means that, in the years to come, more people will live longer and there will be an increased need for palliative care. Marie Curie estimates that, by 2040, at least another 7,000 people every year will die needing palliative care support. That is 50,000 people who we need to ensure receive the support that they deserve. It is clear that we will have to do more to ensure that people get the care that they need now and in the years to come.

When preparing for the debate, I was pleased to see the wealth of support that Marie Curie provides to my South Scotland constituents. It is worth highlighting some of that important work.

In 2017-18, 4,359 visits were made in the NHS Dumfries and Galloway area to 542 people by the region's 31 dedicated Marie Curie nurses. The support from those nurses allowed 72.5 per cent of palliative care patients to die in a place that they chose, which I welcome.

Additionally, I am pleased that, in South Scotland, Marie Curie has seven shops that raise funds for the charity. They are located in Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Lanark, Newton Stewart, Stranraer and Dumfries. There are more than 896 dedicated volunteers, and I thank each and every one of them for their efforts to make the lives of others more comfortable.

I wish Marie Curie every success for this year's great daffodil appeal, and I thank everyone at the charity for everything that they do to support families around Scotland. The compassion, dignity, care, love and kindness that they bring to everyone they look after, as well as their families, can never be covered by a simple thank you, but I want to be clear about my gratitude and that of this Parliament. Marie Curie provides support to our loved ones towards the end of their lives, and it is our role, as politicians, to support the charity as best we can.

17:33

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** I thank Gordon MacDonald, in his absence, for bringing this debate to the chamber. It allows us the opportunity to thank Marie Curie and other organisations that offer palliative care for all the amazing work that they do, and the opportunity to raise awareness of the daffodil appeal.

When I sat in my office last night, wondering about what direction to take with my speech, I happened to glance at the wall on my right, where I have photographs that make me smile—God, do we need to smile in this place sometimes. There is

a picture there from the mid-90s of a bunch of reprobates at a warm-weather training camp. Tommy McKean, Elliot Bunney and Mel Neef are in the photo. At the end of the picture is a friend of mine, Dawn Flockhart, who sadly lost her six-year battle with cancer last month at the age of 51. In her last few months, she was cared for in the Marie Curie hospice in Edinburgh.

If you will indulge me for a minute, Presiding Officer, I will tell members what a prestigious international athlete Dawn Flockhart was. She still holds the Scottish under-15 record for 200 metres, and she represented her country at Scottish and British levels. I remember her humour and cheek at warm-weather training camps. She was always at something—playing practical jokes, laughing and being great company. She gave me a hard time about my politics; the Scottish National Party members would have loved her.

Dawn crammed more into her 51 years than most people do into several lifetimes. There is so much that I could tell members about her—from teaching English to foreign students in Italy to learning yoga in India. She even assisted Paul McKenna by teaching him neurolinguistic programming. That just scratches the surface of what she achieved.

Dawn had a way of connecting with people and a desire to help people. She once insisted on working with my middle daughter on her positive mental attitude towards track racing and performance. She has been described as a force of nature and she was all that and more. My thoughts are with her family and I know that they are grateful to those at Marie Curie for the care and comfort that they gave to Dawn and her family in her last few months.

I am sure that we all have a story to tell. The one thing that strikes me is how young Dawn was. When we consider palliative care, we automatically think of those who are later in life. As I have said before in the Parliament, a positive and active lifestyle can stack the cards in our favour, but it cannot make us immune.

The Scottish Government has a vision in which everyone who needs palliative care will have access to it by 2021. However, one in four people is currently missing out on that much-needed care. Whether it is provided in a hospice, hospital or care home, or as support to stay at home, the requirement is that the appropriate care be available in line with the health and social care delivery plan. From the patient's perspective, and even from an economic perspective, an acute hospital setting is rarely the right environment for end-of-life care.

We are all aware that people are living longer and with more complex conditions—not just

cancer and dementia. Therefore, the need for future palliative care requirements to be mapped out in the midst of budgetary constraints is key.

When I read the Marie Curie briefing document, one phrase struck me, because it reminded me of the debate on carers that we had just last week:

“Far too many carers of those at the end of life are not getting the support they need to enable them to carry out their caring roles. More carers need to be identified.”

I am sure that we said the same thing in the chamber last week.

Therefore, although we get involved in arguments about Brexit, budgets and constitutional bun fights, this debate is an opportunity to remind us—through the clutter of politics—that we can change everyday things that affect people’s lives. Let us all commit to making sure that this is one of those things.

17:37

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** I thank Gordon MacDonald for securing the debate and Emma Harper for leading it. I say to Brian Whittle that that was a lovely tribute. I also say hello to everyone in the public gallery.

I thank Marie Curie for its detailed briefing for members on activities in our constituencies. Most of all, I thank all those who work with Marie Curie to provide invaluable care and support to individuals and families at often the most challenging of times.

The support that Marie Curie provides is possible only because of the magnificent fundraising efforts of countless volunteers. Each March, the great daffodil appeal helps to raise the awareness and funds that allow Marie Curie to continue to provide fantastic support and care to people all over Scotland.

Recently, I joined local volunteers in Wick who were collecting for the great daffodil appeal. The generosity from the local community was fantastic. I congratulate the volunteers on the £955.72 that they collected. I had a great couple of hours chatting to them, laughing and getting to know them—although, being from a small community, I knew most of them already. That is only one of the active groups in Caithness, Sutherland and Ross that I take this opportunity to thank.

In the Highlands, around 2,575 people die each year from cancer, with 1,930 requiring palliative care. In the past year, the Marie Curie nursing team in the Highlands has seen 189 people over 1,403 visits.

Even with the provision of that impressive level of care, it is estimated that one in four people still misses out on palliative care at the end of their

lives. That is why I welcome the Scottish Government’s action in setting out its strategic framework for action in palliative and end-of-life care.

When asked, the vast majority of people say that they would like to be cared for at home or in their community. Specialist and general palliative care services have a proven record in reducing admissions to accident and emergency, and they can prevent unplanned hospital admissions and support appropriate discharge into the community. In 2017-18, nearly 88 per cent of people who died were able to spend their last months of life at home or in a community setting.

Hospices play a critical role in supporting people to achieve their wish to spend their last days at home or in the community. In the NHS Highland area, more than 92 per cent of people achieved their preferred place of death. Without the support of the third sector, it would be impossible for health and social care partnerships to meet those needs and the needs of people living with terminal illness.

Evidence suggests that investing in palliative care services can make efficiencies and savings in the wider health and social care system. The London School of Economics suggests that extending specialist and core palliative care services to people who would benefit from them could result in net savings of more than £4 million.

As we mark the great daffodil appeal this evening, we can celebrate the hard work and commitment of Marie Curie staff and volunteers, but also recognise the significant funding that is required to carry out that work. I endorse what Brian Whittle said about the need for us all to come together. This is the perfect setting for us to do that.

17:41

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate Gordon MacDonald, in his absence, on securing the debate, and I congratulate Emma Harper on opening it. As every member who has spoken has said, Marie Curie has played a vital role in providing palliative care across Scotland and beyond for many years, and the daffodil has become a widely recognised symbol of the support that the charity provides for people with cancer and other terminal conditions. The daffodil pins that many of us are wearing today are not just a way for Marie Curie to raise much-needed funds for its hospices, homecare nurses and support networks; as Brian Whittle illustrated so well, they are also a way for many people to remember those whom they have lost to cancer and other illnesses, who benefited in their

final days from the expert care of Marie Curie nurses.

There is no Marie Curie hospice in Aberdeen, but there are about 50 Marie Curie nurses working in Aberdeen and across the Grampian area to support people with cancer and terminal conditions. They made over 6,000 home visits to more than 1,000 patients in 2017-18. The helper service that is run by Marie Curie, which sees volunteers go into the homes of people who are receiving end-of-life care to provide support and friendship, has recently been reorganised in our area and now covers the whole of the north of Scotland. With nearly 100 volunteers in Grampian alone, the service is particularly valuable to people who are receiving end-of-life care in rural areas and to their families. It supports people who would otherwise find it difficult to access the kind of support that they need.

Marie Curie is one of the longest-running charities that support terminally ill patients, and, in Aberdeen and the north-east, as in many areas of Scotland, it works alongside other national and local charities. The Marie Curie people with whom I deal are keen to emphasise that they are part of a wider family of support for people with cancer. Aberdeen has its own Maggie's centre, which provides support and advice to cancer patients, while Macmillan Cancer Support has a regular advice session at Aberdeen Citizens Advice Bureau as well as running local support groups. CLAN Cancer Support works to support cancer patients and their families across Grampian and in Orkney and Shetland. Cancer patients from the northern isles often come to Aberdeen royal infirmary for cancer treatment, and CLAN provides accommodation for patients and their families at CLAN Haven as well as counselling and therapy at the purpose-built CLAN House in Aberdeen. The family of support for people who are in such circumstances is therefore very important.

Marie Curie nurses play a key role in providing practical palliative care for patients with terminal cancer and other diseases. Marie Curie relies on the huge good will that it enjoys to raise the funds that are required to provide such services, but it is important for us all—and perhaps especially for the Government—to recognise that, on its own, such fantastic voluntary effort cannot achieve everything. As Emma Harper said, as our population ages, demand for palliative care will only increase, and much of that demand will fall on integration authorities, health boards and local councils, all of which face their own funding challenges—perhaps especially, but not solely, in the north-east. It is therefore vital that the Scottish Government continues to address such issues, supports the effective integration of health and social care, which we have debated on a number of occasions, and provides the support that the

whole sector needs to move forward. Inevitably, Marie Curie will see an increase in demand for its specialist nurses and so will need to receive continued support.

I close by paying tribute to all the Marie Curie nurses and volunteers, who do vital work in what can be a very difficult area. I also acknowledge all those—including you, Presiding Officer—who deliver and support the great daffodil appeal every year, which will allow that important work to continue into the future.

17:46

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I thank Gordon MacDonald for securing the debate and allowing us the opportunity to speak about Marie Curie and its annual great daffodil appeal. I also welcome the Marie Curie staff and volunteers who are visiting the Parliament today.

Every year since 1986, the appeal has called on people across the country to donate and to wear daffodil pins during the month of March so that Marie Curie can continue to care for people with terminal illnesses who deserve high-quality, patient-friendly and sympathetic care. Through its invaluable services and support, Marie Curie helps to relieve physical, emotional and financial stress on terminally ill individuals and their families. It allows patients with palliative care needs to retain an element of independence and control by granting them the option to leave hospital and stay in the comfort of their own homes, with the guarantee that they will be cared for by hard-working, compassionate nurses. In Fife, 89.3 per cent of patients who were supported by Marie Curie in 2018 spent the last six months of their lives at home or in community settings, which allowed 97 per cent of them to pass away in their chosen place.

Marie Curie does an excellent job of respecting its patients' wishes in its provision of social care, which is an integral part of palliative care. In partnership with NHS Fife, it has been commissioned to provide a variety of nursing, emotional and practical home-based support that involves everything from helping patients to manage symptoms and assisting with meals to having weekly chats. Each year, in Fife, approximately 4,190 people die, of whom 3,140—about 75 per cent—have palliative care needs. That is why the great daffodil appeal is of such importance. Last year, in Fife alone, a team of 13 Marie Curie nurses conducted 4,062 visits and saw a total of 338 patients. Along with the nursing team, 153 dedicated volunteers gave their time to support terminally ill patients and their families across the region. The organisation's befriending service in Fife, which is known as helper, currently supports 27 families, and more volunteers are due

to begin their training. Marie Curie's support in the area is invaluable to the countless members of my community who have been, and continue to be, touched by its services.

In October 2018, I had the pleasure of meeting representatives of Marie Curie and hearing more about the life-changing difference that they make to the lives of those they serve. It is vital that people are made aware of the services that Marie Curie provides and that they take advantage of those services if they are struggling to care for themselves or know someone else who is. No one should have to endure illness or suffering in isolation.

My constituency of Kirkcaldy is proud to be home to a Marie Curie charity shop. Time and time again, since its opening, the shop has been proven to enhance the town. It is run by volunteers, raises awareness of the organisation's causes, encourages charitable giving and, most important, highlights the impact of Marie Curie in the area. Volunteers are the backbone of Marie Curie and I cannot praise them highly enough. Without them, it would not be able to provide the level of care and support that it does. The Kirkcaldy fundraising group, which has raised £24,310 since its formation in August 2014, has six active members, and they are taking part in this month's great daffodil appeal collections.

The volunteers deserve our sincerest gratitude and support for all their hard work and dedication. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to join them on many occasions and to help with their fundraising efforts, and it is an incredible experience to see fellow Fifers of all age groups with big smiles on their faces, tins in hand, encouraging and inspiring others to do good in the community. I have seen at first hand how proud and happy the volunteers are to lend a hand and be part of such a worthy cause. Volunteering allows people to give back to the community; it is truly a satisfying and humbling experience, which is why I am very much looking forward to offering my help to my local fundraising team once again for this year's appeal and to joining them down on Kirkcaldy High Street.

I wish Marie Curie and all its volunteers across Scotland all the best with the great daffodil appeal in 2019. I and my staff will be wearing the bright yellow daffodil to raise awareness and make a difference, and I encourage everyone else to do the same.

17:51

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** I, too, echo members' thanks to Gordon MacDonald for securing a debate on this important issue. We cover many topics in the chamber, but

the debates on end-of-life care are some of the most poignant and profound that we have, and I feel very privileged to speak in the debate this evening. Listening to the other speeches, I have also been reflecting on the fact that the experience of members across the country is very similar to mine with regard to the work that Marie Curie does in giving comfort and showing compassion to people in their last, sometimes very difficult, hours of life.

All told, there are only 23 Marie Curie nurses in the Lothian region, but their reach extends far beyond that. They give more than palliative care; they give compassion and love not just to those in their final hours but to those around them who loved them, and that speaks volumes about the character of the people who choose that life and profession. Not everyone can be a Marie Curie nurse.

In the time that is available, I will reflect on two events that have happened to me since I spoke in last year's debate on the subject. The first was a visit that was organised by Marie Curie to its Frogston hospice in Edinburgh, where many of my constituents will spend their last days. The place was familiar to me because my wife's grandmother died there in 2002, and I said so to the receptionist when I arrived. She asked, "What was your gran's name?" When I said, "It was Bridie, but she was here in 2002," she said, "Oh, you mean Bridie Douglas?" Sixteen years later, the receptionist still remembered my wife's grandmother with fondness, and I was really struck by that sense of human interest and the desire to get to know the people in their care, see the human being and know their life story.

The second event happened at exactly this time last year. My wife's father was taken into hospital with what was suspected to be a simple bladder infection—he had profound multiple sclerosis, so he was prone to such infections—but it quickly became apparent that he had advanced liver cancer and that he had only weeks, if not days, to live. The battle was to get him home. Like many families, we really struggled to make sure that an adequate social care package was in place to underpin his being able to spend his last days at home, which was where he definitely wanted to be. Marie Curie was vital to achieving that—indeed, we could not have done it without the help of the nurses. In those last six days, from his discharge from hospital to when he sadly passed away, we were able to build a bubble of love, light and happiness around him in his family home with the support of the Marie Curie nurses.

The nurses offered so much more than I ever expected. I had never seen them in operation as I did at Rob's bedside. They taught me to massage moisturiser into his arms, because, like most



people who are coming towards the end, he was very dehydrated. It was one of the most intimate experiences that I had ever had with my father-in-law—I did it while I was talking to him and so on. The nurses also taught me how to rehydrate him by putting water to his mouth.

The nurses' care stretched beyond Rob's final hours. That was brought home to me when, a week after his funeral, a Marie Curie nurse appeared at the door with a bunch of flowers and a mobile number. That offer of continuing pastoral care is one that we have leaned into from time to time. Put simply, they made what could have been a tragic and very sad experience one that we reflect on with fondness and love, and I thank them for that. I also thank everyone who is in the chamber to support them, and I am grateful for having had the opportunity to debate the subject in Parliament today.

17:54

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** I sincerely thank my good friend Gordon MacDonald for securing the debate, and Emma Harper for leading it so effectively. I welcome those who are in the public gallery to support the work that Marie Curie does. It has been interesting to hear about the experiences of other members and about their contributions to Marie Curie and some of the challenges that they have faced in their lives.

Incidentally, I joined Gordon MacDonald last week for a photo shoot that he organised, for which I thank him. I also thank him for giving me the opportunity to wear one of those splendid yellow Marie Curie top hats—I have already had some mickey taken out of me in my constituency because of the photographs that appeared in the *Stirling Observer*.

What I really want to do is to thank Marie Curie for the incredible work that it does in providing end-of-life care for people in my constituency and to recognise the role of the organisation's many volunteers. I believe that, almost two years ago, I was one of the first MSPs—if not the first—to host a Marie Curie blooming great tea party fundraiser. I held the event in my constituency office in STEP, the Stirling enterprise park, and it was well attended, mostly by employees from the many offices in the surrounding complex. Who doesn't love a good cup of tea, a slice of cake and a good blether? Why am I telling this story? The reason is that I was struck by the fact that, invariably, the conversation among those who attended the tea party turned to what Marie Curie meant to them, and I will come on to that a bit later.

First, I want to say that the Marie Curie shop in Stirling city centre is incredibly well run by a dedicated team of local volunteers. Recently, I had

the chance to drop in as part of Stirling's bid to become Europe's volunteering capital and to speak to Morag, the shop manager, about how important the place is to local people. It is a place where people pop in not only for a wee bargain but to have a chat with the volunteers. As members might imagine, those volunteers, along with having those blethers, do a great job of raising funds on behalf of Marie Curie.

Most recently, I caught up with local Marie Curie activists Freida and Jim in Stirling's Morrisons store on Friday. Jim, who is the area manager, told me about his varied role in the organisation. Freida is a local volunteer who is originally from Bannockburn and who has worked in hospitals for a number of years. She told me how important Marie Curie's service has been to her. The two were handing out the daffodil pins that all members are wearing this evening. It was remarkable—humbling, actually—to see so many people give so generously to the bucket.

The work of Marie Curie means so much to every one of us in the Parliament and to many in our constituencies across the country. As has been said, most of us will have known someone who went through an end-of-life experience. It is not just the patient who experiences that difficult situation but the family and close loved ones. The help and advice that the Marie Curie staff provide are an invaluable lifeline to many people. The nurses provide free one-to-one nursing to those with terminal illnesses, which can be overnight or even at very short notice in a crisis. Just knowing that the service is available brings comfort to people who are going through that difficult time. No matter how bad things get, help is there.

I have witnessed at first hand just how much the care that Marie Curie nurses provides means to people. I will quickly tell the story that I mentioned earlier. One Marie Curie nurse visited my office to let me know about their work locally and, by sheer coincidence, that nurse had been an end-of-life carer for the mother of one of my staff members. The reunion between those two people, who had been through a lot together, was as deeply emotional as it was joyful. I could see on their faces just how much that joint experience had meant to them. That was a very moving moment that I will never forget.

Marie Curie is a vital crutch to those who are going through what is perhaps the most difficult event that life invariably throws at us. Thank goodness that that organisation exists. Without it, people in such situations and their families would have a much more difficult time. I am sorry that I cannot be at the reception this evening to celebrate the work of Marie Curie and the blooming great tea party.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There are three members still to speak, plus the minister, and we are running out of time. I am therefore minded to accept a motion without notice, under rule 8.14.3, to extend the debate by up to 30 minutes. I invite Emma Harper to move the motion.

*Motion moved,*

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

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I remind members who might be concerned about this that parliamentary receptions are not allowed to begin until business in the chamber is finished.

I call Edward Mountain, who will be followed by Maureen Watt.

18:00

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I had just calculated that I could speak for 10 minutes, but then you commented that I am standing between people and their reception. I will be mindful of the time.

I thank Gordon MacDonald for securing the debate and Emma Harper for opening it.

When I met Marie Curie representatives in December, I was inspired by the care and support that they offer to patients across the Highlands. The help that the charity provides is vital. Last year, Marie Curie made 1,403 visits to terminally ill people at home across the region, supporting 92 per cent of those people to die in the place of their choice.

Let us not forget—I do not forget—that none of that would be possible without the huge energy that goes into fundraising efforts. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the 14 local fundraising groups in the Highlands who raised more than £170,000 in 2017-18. The money will go a long way to supporting loved ones across the Highlands.

I want to thank Gordon MacDonald for reminding the Parliament, in the motion, that Scotland still has a way to go in ensuring that everyone with a terminal illness receives the care that they need. As we heard, one in four people misses out on the palliative care that they need at the end of their life. We need to do better, and I am delighted that the Government is stepping forward to try to ensure that, by 2021, everyone gets the palliative care that they need. I urge the minister to be bold and achieve that before 2021. The clock is ticking for all of us as Scotland's ageing population rises and the demand for palliative care increases.

The issue unites the Parliament, as we heard. Many of us have lost a family member or friend to a terminal illness. I can say from personal experience that, without palliative care, our loved ones cannot make a choice about where they want to be in their final moments. Dying with dignity is the mark of a civilised society, and I strongly believe that everyone must have the right to die in the location of their choosing, which might be at home.

That is why Marie Curie is so important, and that is why I wear the daffodil every year, so that people know that we are supporting them in their wish. I admit, however, that on Saturday I will take the daffodil off, because I am going to a rugby match and I am not sure that I want to be seen wearing a daffodil on Saturday. At every other time of the day and week, I am very happy to wear and support it—I can see that that has not gone down well, but from a rugby point of view I just think that I will not wear it on Saturday.

I urge everyone to wear the daffodil, to join the great daffodil appeal this March and to take the time to thank all those people from Marie Curie who are helping our friends and families in their last days.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Maureen Watt is not going to speak; we appear to have had a wee problem with her button. However, let me tell everyone that she looks very fetching in that yellow top hat. [*Laughter.*]

18:03

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I am happy to step in as a substitute for Maureen Watt, and I thank Gordon MacDonald for securing the debate and Emma Harper for stepping into the breach and leading the debate, thereby taking on the mantle that you have so ably carried in recent years.

Debates in this place always benefit when members are able to draw on personal experience, and we had powerful examples of that from Brian Whittle and my colleague Alex Cole-Hamilton.

I pay tribute to the phenomenal work that is done by Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers on behalf of people with a terminal illness and their families. We should never fall into the trap of being complacent about that work, and I am confident that we will not do so.

We also need to bear it in mind, as the motion reminds us, that thousands of people across Scotland who need palliative care are still missing out. Given the ageing population and that annual death rates are on the rise, the numbers who are unable to access the end-of-life care that they

need will inevitably increase unless steps are taken to address the problem.

I very much welcome the Government's action plan for palliative and end-of-life care. As others have reminded us, it commits to ensuring that, by 2021, everyone who needs palliative care will get it. However, for that to happen, the issue will need to be given greater priority by health and social care partnerships, and there will need to be resourcing from Government.

To meet that target, we will also need to address discrepancies and inequalities in access. Emma Harper was absolutely right to say that there are disparities in care for those who are over 85, those who live alone, ethnic minorities and those who live in deprivation. There are also disparities between those who suffer from cancer as opposed to those with other terminal conditions such as dementia, motor neurone disease and heart failure, who seem to be overrepresented among those who are not getting access to care.

I acknowledge the efforts of those who are responsible for delivering the service in my constituency in Orkney. As I have said previously, the service is relatively new in the islands, but it has already shown its worth and value. Feedback from those who have benefited from the service remains incredibly positive. Inevitably, as a result, demand is likely to continue to grow—more so, I suspect, than the two nurses who are operating in Orkney will be able to support.

Therefore, I hope and expect that every effort will be made to enable that demand to be met through close work with general practices and other relevant local services, which reflects the essential partnership between public and voluntary sectors. There certainly appears to be strong support in the Orkney community, which was reflected in the response to the fundraising heroics of Linda Lennie and her team of local volunteers. I am delighted that Linda is in the chamber again to witness the debate and attend tonight's reception.

I congratulate Gordon MacDonald on enabling the debate to take place. I wish everyone who is involved in the great daffodil appeal every success this year. To all the Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers, I offer my sincere thanks for the exceptional work that they do in allowing people to die with dignity in a place of their choice.

18:07

**The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick):** I add my congratulations to Gordon MacDonald on securing tonight's debate, and to Emma Harper on stepping into the breach and leading the debate. I also thank members from across the chamber for what has been an excellent debate with some powerful

speeches. I particularly thank Alex Cole-Hamilton and Brian Whittle for their touching speeches, which put the importance of Marie Curie in context.

The fact that the great daffodil appeal is still going strong after more than three decades is a fantastic achievement, of which Marie Curie's staff and volunteers should be rightly proud. From hearing members across the chamber, I know that we all agree that the fantastic work that Marie Curie does in Scotland is invaluable. It fulfils a vital role in supporting those who are nearing the end of their lives and in sustaining a multitude of families and friends around them.

Since my appointment as part of the health team, I have been immensely impressed by the range and breadth of support that Marie Curie offers. It was good to hear members give examples of that support from across Scotland, and there are a number of great examples from my constituency in Dundee. Those examples show that Marie Curie provides a much broader range of support than people might traditionally expect of the organisation. The skills, compassion and care that are provided are more important than ever, as the demand for such services is set to increase due to the well-understood changes in our population, which Lewis Macdonald mentioned.

We all want a fairer, healthier Scotland and the Marie Curie great daffodil appeal presents a timely opportunity for us to reflect on the challenges that we face to meet those specific needs and an opportunity to set out the concrete steps that we are taking to address them.

Scotland is already a world leader in the field of palliative and end-of-life care, and I am proud of the progress that we have made in the past few years in increasing the numbers of specialist staff, improving access to services and, through our programme of health and social care integration, putting services under the control of our local communities.

However, there is more to do. The Scottish Government is committed to working with organisations such as Marie Curie to take forward our shared aim of ensuring that everyone in Scotland who would benefit from palliative and end-of-life care has access to it by 2021. That is an ambitious goal, but we feel that it is within reach.

In December 2015, we published our strategic framework for action on palliative and end-of-life care, which sets out commitments that are designed to improve the quality and availability of palliative and end-of-life care in Scotland. However, to achieve that vision, it is essential that we create the right conditions nationally to support

local communities in their planning and delivery of palliative and end-of-life care services to ensure that the needs of each individual are met. That ethos is at the heart of health and social care integration. Integration authorities work with local communities and build on the expertise of organisations such as Marie Curie to commission services that are truly designed to meet the palliative and end-of-life care needs of their local community. Commissioning services in that way will drive improvements through meaningful, collaborative partnerships with the palliative and end-of-life care community.

Key to the success of that work is the power of integration authorities to drive real change. They will manage almost £9 billion of resources that were previously managed separately by NHS boards and local authorities. This year, that includes more than £550 million of health investment to support integration and social care, which will increase to exceed £700 million in 2019-20. We have asked Healthcare Improvement Scotland to work with integration authorities to test and implement improvements in access to and delivery of palliative and end-of-life care. Data is vital; without it, we do not know whether people are indeed getting the palliative and end-of-life care that they need, local communities cannot commission the services that are needed to support people's care and care plans will remain hard to share.

That data challenge is recognised in our strategic framework for action, which contains a commitment to support improvements in the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data and evidence relating to the needs, provision, activity, indicators and outcomes in respect of palliative and end-of-life care. A working group is tasked with clarifying the data requirements to ensure that they are valuable for individuals who are receiving care and for integration authorities in the planning, commissioning and improving of local services. Working with the NHS Information Services Division, the data group is investigating areas in which data collection and use can be improved.

I turn now to the values and skills that people need from our health and social care staff. It is difficult to discuss death and dying, and to do that well requires a great deal of personal resilience and compassion. Developing the skills to have those difficult conversations is critical for having timely and helpful anticipatory care planning conversations. Having those conversations, and sharing what matters to a person at the end of their life, can make all the difference to how and where they die and the care that they receive. Enabling people to be with those who are most appropriate as they approach death is not a simple skill; it calls not just on people's technical skills but

on their values, life experience and compassion. Locally focused community work, such as that of Compassionate Inverclyde, embodies the ethos of whole communities that come together to support one another with compassion at points of grief, loss and change.

Finally, I will say a bit about palliative and end-of-life care research. Over the past few years, the Scottish Government has provided funding to our well-established palliative care research forum to support Marie Curie and academic colleagues to undertake work to help us to develop a clearer picture of research and data gaps and to support improvement in identifying people who might benefit from palliative approaches and the co-ordination of their care. That will be helpful in realising our shared vision for palliative care in Scotland.

Through our combined efforts and continued productive collaboration, I am optimistic that work towards our shared goals will bring about further innovation and transformative change in palliative and end-of-life care. I look forward to continuing to work with Marie Curie on that shared aim for many years to come. I also look forward to joining other members in the garden lobby for the Marie Curie reception that will take place immediately after this debate, which is a further opportunity for us all to thank Marie Curie and its staff, nurses and volunteers for the amazing work that they do for us all.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes the debate. I add my personal thanks to all the Marie Curie volunteers who are in the public gallery tonight and my apologies that I am unable to come to the reception.

*Meeting closed at 18:16.*

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