



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Tuesday 14 November 2017**

**Session 5**



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# Scottish Parliament

*Tuesday 14 November 2017*

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

## Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Our first item of business today is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader is the Rev Margaret Shuttleworth, minister of Sauchie and Coalsnaughton parish church.

**Rev Margaret Shuttleworth (Sauchie and Coalsnaughton Parish Church):** Presiding Officer and members of the Scottish Parliament, I thank you for the honour of this invitation to speak to you this afternoon. It is an honour and something of a shock to me to be asked. I know that most of my old teachers would be astonished.

I had a very bad experience of school. I left school with no qualifications and, when I was there, I was, for the most part, educated in what were then called remedial classes. Among my most vivid memories of school are being given the belt for repeatedly not identifying my bs and ds.

I hope that by now you will have identified the problem that they did not. I suffered from dyslexia. I still do. My script today is in a special font which is designed to help my reading.

The guidance teacher told me to leave school and get work as a hairdresser. Thanks to a start in the old youth opportunities programme—that dates me—I worked for 25 years with people with learning difficulties. Today I am proud to serve the people of Sauchie and Coalsnaughton parish church.

To do that I had to go to the University of Glasgow where, eventually, I got a degree. Ironically, given my difficulty with letters, I got a BD—or it might be a DB; I am still not very sure about it.

I do not tell you my story to cultivate your sympathy or your admiration. I tell you this story because I want to say that I know what it is to be a person on the margins. I know what it is to be a person whom the system fails in some way. For many of us, throughout our adult life that translates into us being a failure.

Jesus operated from the margins and for the margins, and he called the powerful and the leaders to care for them. In his kingdom, and I hope in ours, the highest goal should be to help those who cannot speak up or who, when they do speak up, are not heard.

That is where policy should start. After all, it is at the margins and on the edges where the real shape of society is defined.

I repeat my thanks to you, Presiding Officer, and to the Parliament for inviting me to come here today. I wish you God's blessing on your work.

## Business Motion

14:04

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-08858, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revised business programme for today.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Tuesday 14 November 2017—

after

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Migration

insert

*followed by* Election to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body—[*Joe FitzPatrick*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The nomination period for the election of a member for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is now open. Members may have received an email, but if they wish further information, they can seek it from the parliamentary business team. Nominations should be submitted to the parliamentary business team by 4.30 pm, and the election will take place just before decision time today.

## Topical Question Time

14:05

### Burntisland Fabrications

1. **David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it is giving to Burntisland Fabrications to secure jobs in Fife and Lewis. (S5T-00755)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work (Keith Brown):** Discussions are on-going between the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and the company, and the Government is fully exploring all the options that are available to save the company and the jobs that depend on it.

When ministers became aware of the situation, we immediately engaged with all the relevant stakeholders. The Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy had a conversation with the management team at BiFab to get a detailed insight into the challenges; he had detailed discussions with shareholders of the Beatrice project to ascertain more details; and he also discussed the issues directly with Seaway Heavy Lifting, which is the main contractor for the Beatrice project. In addition, both he and I have been involved in discussions today with those parties.

The Government and Scottish Enterprise are continuing those discussions, and we are encouraging all parties to work constructively to find a solution. I have also spoken directly to the trade unions and conveyed that we will do everything possible to support the workforce.

I appreciate that this is a very concerning time for the workforce, but the Government is committed to doing everything that we can to find a positive solution to the situation. We want to see a solution at BiFab and ensure that Scottish engineering and manufacturing are central to the supply chain for the renewable energy sector and for oil and gas going forward.

**David Torrance:** Following the announcement yesterday by GMB and Unite members regarding a planned work-in, it is clear that the workforce at BiFab are serious about playing their part in the company's survival and future success. Does the cabinet secretary agree that the Scottish Government owes it to those workers to leave no stone unturned in finding a solution?

**Keith Brown:** I agree that that is an obligation on the Scottish Government. Of course, we are not directly involved, in that the contract is between private companies and the issues that have arisen have been between those private

companies. However, for the reasons that David Torrance mentioned, we are of course very interested and we want to do what we can to help to achieve a solution.

At root, we are talking about the future of 600 people who are directly employed and up to 1,400 people in general, including contractors and subcontractors. That has a huge impact on the areas that David Torrance mentioned in both Fife and the Western Isles. For the benefit of those individuals and for the benefit of the contract for the renewables sector and the Scottish economy, we are of course interested in doing whatever we can to help the situation.

**David Torrance:** More generally, BiFab plays a role in Scotland's green reindustrialisation. In order to maximise Scotland's renewables potential, create jobs and grow our economy, we need the engineering skills and fabrication capacity that BiFab has at its sites in Burntisland, Methil and Arnish. What priority does the Scottish Government give to placing and securing the future of BiFab in Scotland's wider economy and the long-term future of renewable energy?

**Keith Brown:** As I have said, it is my firm belief that Scottish engineering and manufacturing are central to the supply chain for the renewable energy sector and for oil and gas. With several billion pounds being invested in offshore wind and the potential for more investment in our offshore oil and gas sector, the Government believes that the Scottish supply chain should be well placed to take full advantage of those opportunities.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Five members wish to ask supplementary questions. Whether we can get through them all depends on members.

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Reports say that delays in payments have contributed to BiFab's cash-flow problems. Considering that Scotland has the highest level of late payments of any part of the United Kingdom, with reports that 67 per cent of companies are affected, what action is the Scottish Government taking to solve this on-going and severe problem that BiFab and others face?

**Keith Brown:** I repeat for Alexander Stewart's benefit that the companies that are involved in the contract are private companies. For our part, the Scottish Government has taken action to make sure that we pay all our suppliers promptly, and through the Scottish business pledge we ensure that as many companies as possible—at the last count, over 400—also follow best practice in relation to that.

I do not think that delays in payments are at the root of the problem, but payments certainly are. Ensuring that payments are made as they become

due is, of course, a very important part of the process. However, there is not much value in going into more detail on that, given the discussions that we are currently having with the private companies involved.

As a regional member for Mid Scotland and Fife, Alexander Stewart will want to be assured that the Scottish Government is doing what it can to find a solution for the situation. The future of 1,400 people at a very difficult time of the year, a very important contract and the reputation of the renewables sector in Scotland are, of course, at the base of the matter. We are well aware of the challenges, and it would be useful to have the general support of other parties. That would help us to carry as much weight as possible into the discussions.

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** BiFab employs more than 150 people in Arnish in the Western Isles. Those jobs have a disproportionately large impact on the local economy, and the employer is one of the biggest private sector employers in the area.

The cabinet secretary talked about the Scottish Government working with Scottish Enterprise, but he did not mention Highlands and Islands Enterprise. What role will HIE have in working alongside the workers in Arnish and the trade unions to reassure the workforce that alternative jobs will be found if the jobs cannot be saved?

**Keith Brown:** I reassure Rhoda Grant that HIE has been kept fully engaged in the process. It has, of course, a direct interest in the site in the Western Isles as it is the owner of that site. We will use anybody's good offices to try to achieve the right solution and, as I said, HIE has been involved and engaged in the process.

Rhoda Grant has made a very important point. The impact of 100 jobs on the Western Isles is huge. It is no small matter that 1,300 other jobs elsewhere in Scotland could also be jeopardised. We are well aware of the potential damage that could be done to individuals and to the economy, so we want to work with all parties, whether the party is HIE, Scottish Enterprise, any of the other parties or, indeed, the UK Government, which also has a direct role, although I will not go into the details of that. We are not being precious about the matter or trying to keep it to ourselves; we want to get the right solution, and we are happy to work with anybody and to use all the assets that we have to get that solution.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** The Dutch contractor, Seaway Heavy Lifting, has stated that it is

"keen to support BiFab's workforce".

What is the cabinet secretary's understanding of that offer? Does he plan to speak to his counterparts in the Government of the Netherlands?

**Keith Brown:** We have engaged with the company that Mark Ruskell mentioned, and we are looking to engage further with it. Obviously, it is central to the contract, and there has been some movement in the willingness of different partners to come to a solution that will keep BiFab going through the contract, but there is still some way to go.

We have not had discussions and do not currently plan to have discussions with the Government of the Netherlands. We are discussing matters with the appropriate party, which is Seaway Heavy Lifting. If Mark Ruskell is aware of a rationale for or purpose behind contacting the Dutch Government, I would, in all sincerity, be keen to hear exactly what that is so that we can take advantage of any opportunities. In the meantime, we will continue to discuss the matter with the parties that are most closely involved.

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** On the potential job losses at BiFab, the cabinet secretary will be aware that this is not the first time in recent months and years that Levenmouth has been devastated by unemployment and that, today, across my constituency and that of my colleague David Torrance, one in three children lives in poverty. What consideration has been given to establishing a group or a task force in light of the BiFab situation? Will the cabinet secretary meet me and fellow Fife MSPs to discuss urgent proposals to support the local economy?

**Keith Brown:** Jenny Gilruth has made a very good point about keeping MSPs and MPs aware. Paul Wheelhouse and I have been involved with the matter for some time. I am very willing to meet those members to keep them updated as far as we are able to do so. As can be imagined, some of the discussions are commercially confidential, but where we can pass on information on the current state of discussions, we would be happy to do that. I will ensure that that happens for Jenny Gilruth and other members who have an interest in the area.

On the point about a task force, we have assembled the people necessary to do that work. We have had task forces in the past, of course. At this stage, our focus is on making sure that the company stays viable and that the jobs stay in place. We have all the resources and the different parties available to do that, but we will keep the matter under review.

Again, I confirm to Jenny Gilruth that we are well aware of her very pertinent points about the level of unemployment in Fife, particularly in her part of Fife. That is why we are pulling out all the stops to ensure that the jobs stay where they are and that the contract is completed.

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** This is an extremely worrying time for the workforce and the local community. There has been conflicting speculation in the press that the root of the problem at BiFab is a dispute over delayed payments between the company and Seaway Heavy Lifting. Although the cabinet secretary says that he does not believe that to be the root of the problem, does he recognise that delayed payments are an issue? If so, will he confirm, either in the chamber today or perhaps in confidence to MSPs, the value of the payments that BiFab has requested of Seaway Heavy Lifting, the value of the work that has been certified and the value that has been paid to BiFab? Until we have clarity over the financial picture we and, most important, all the BiFab workers are in the dark over how the issue can be resolved.

**Keith Brown:** I assure Claire Baker that we will seek to pass on as much information, especially on the amounts involved, as we are able to. First, I want to check that we would be doing so in a way that is consistent with our obligations to the private sector partners who we are discussing the issue with.

I am talking not so much about delayed payments as about disputed payments. Of course, a disputed payment may lead to a delay in a payment being made. That is the nature of a dispute; there is a relationship between the two. We are trying to get to the bottom of that and a number of other issues so that we can ensure that cash flow is available to BiFab to keep the company going and for it to be able to pay its staff, which is crucial.

I want to say how much we appreciate the activities of the trade unions in continuing to work in the yards under what is, as Claire Baker says, a very distressing time for the workers.

We are obliged to try to work with the private sector partners. There is the issue of trust to consider in relation to some of the figures that have been passed on to us, but I undertake to pass on whatever figures we are able to pass on to Claire Baker and other MSPs with an interest.

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank the minister and the members for getting through all five questions.

### Scottish Police Authority

**2. Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the reported criticism of the Scottish Police



Authority by some members of its board. (S5T-00759)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** The report published yesterday relates to the early years of the authority's existence. Since that time, a range of measures have been taken to learn from experience and to strengthen governance arrangements.

In order to address a number of remaining issues identified by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland earlier this year, I commissioned a review of the executive functions to ensure that the board is getting the support that it needs to perform its role effectively. The review is expected to report in the coming weeks.

**Margaret Mitchell:** In a Scottish institute for policing research report, one former SPA board member has stated:

"Every time we try to bite, the government removes a tooth ... I have been shocked, absolutely shocked at the level of government interaction."

Can the cabinet secretary comment on that? Given that

"Scottish Ministers have formal powers to give directions to the SPA, so long as those directions are not related to police operations"

will he confirm whether he or any other Scottish ministers have used those powers? If so, when were they used and under what circumstances?

**Michael Matheson:** Although ministers have the power of direction over the SPA, it is not a power that I have ever exercised. I do not think that my predecessor ever exercised the power, either.

I strongly refute the idea that Scottish ministers are, in some way, interfering with the role of the SPA. However, if Margaret Mitchell is not satisfied with my response, she need look only at the evidence that was provided to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee by Her Majesty's inspector of constabulary in Scotland, Derek Penman, who said that he found no evidence of Scottish Government interference in setting of agendas or in submission of papers.

As a Government, we are responsible for setting the national strategic policing authority's overall objectives, so we have regular on-going engagement with the SPA in areas of shared interest. As HMICS has identified, it has found no evidence to support the suggestion that there is Government interference.

**Margaret Mitchell:** When the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 was passed, all the Opposition parties raised concerns about there being too much ministerial influence. Those concerns fell on deaf ears. While the SPA chair

appointment procedure has been modified for the current selection process to include the convener of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, the cabinet secretary retains major influence in that appointment. Will he now confirm that the Government will revisit the 2012 act and amend it to ensure that Parliament as a whole selects—and, crucially, is involved in the decision on whether to reappoint—the SPA chair, and that the discretion for ministers to intervene will be exercised transparently? In that way, the new SPA chair will at least have the comfort of knowing that he or she does not have to rely on the good grace of the cabinet secretary for continuation of their appointment.

**Michael Matheson:** I have no plans to revisit the legislation.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** Media focus and attention on the SPA board have been ongoing issues that detract from the work of the board. What steps will the cabinet secretary take, in conjunction with the board, to ensure that all board members have proper training, and that they fully understand not only their individual roles but their collective responsibilities?

In relation to governance, will the cabinet secretary ensure that the clear dividing line between the board's scrutiny role and Government oversight is fully understood by all parties?

**Michael Matheson:** Mary Fee raises an important issue, which is about making sure that those who join public boards have the necessary training and support to undertake their duties effectively. I am very keen—we are keen, as a Government—to make sure that that is happening. That is why, in September 2016, the Scottish Government implemented a new corporate induction programme for all new members on public boards, in order to ensure that they have the necessary training and support to assist them in undertaking their roles, and that they have proper understanding of the on-board guidance that is issued to them, and how they should interpret it.

I can also assure Mary Fee that the work that I have instructed through Dr Nicola Marchant, the deputy chair of the SPA, along with Malcolm Burr, is to look at the overall support function that is provided to the SPA board and to identify where further measures can be put in place to support board members in their roles. That is not just about the board members themselves making sure that they are getting the right information; it is also about making sure that Police Scotland provides them with the information that the board requires in order to hold Police Scotland to account and to scrutinise the actions of the service—in particular, its executive team.

I am very much committed to making sure that board members receive the training and support that they require. Work is being done by Malcolm Burr and Nicola Marchant precisely to help the board in discharging its responsibilities and identifying what further support is necessary to make sure that it can do that effectively in the future.

## Preventing Sexual Offending Involving Children and Young People

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is a statement by Michael Matheson on preventing sexual offending involving children and young people. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:23

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):** Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Scotland's children and young people is a key priority for us all. As Cabinet Secretary for Justice, I am committed to a preventative approach to offending that involves children and young people. Our "Justice Vision and Priorities" underlines our commitment to being led by the best available evidence. Our whole-system approach to offending by young people is proven to work, as it has driven down offending referrals by over 80 per cent in the past decade. It involves emphasising timely and appropriate action to address crime and its causes, through early and effective intervention, diversion and specialist support. That complements a broader focus on prevention, mainly through universal children's services as part of getting it right for every child.

However, we will always need more specialist support and intervention for some young people. In 2016, I commissioned research to analyse the increase in the "Other sexual crimes" category of police-recorded crime. That category had grown to become the largest category of sexual offences: 40 per cent of recorded sexual crime is made up of other sexual crimes. It is the largest individual category ahead of sexual assault.

There were suggestions that that growth was driven in part by an increase in cyber-related offences. The research report "Recorded Crime in Scotland: Other Sexual Crimes, 2013-14 and 2016-17" highlighted that offences that fall into the other sexual crimes category are often committed online. It is important to note that online crimes are much more likely to have younger victims, who are mainly female, and younger perpetrators, who are mainly male.

According to the research report, it is estimated that around half the increase in all recorded sexual crime is due to the growth in other sexual crimes that are committed online, which include behaviour such as communicating indecently or causing others to view sexual activity or images. Where those crimes are committed online, there is a disproportionate impact on our young people. Three quarters of victims in 2016-17 were under

16, with an average age of 14. In a quarter of cases, both the victim and the perpetrator were under 16. The research highlighted a significant gendered element across all other sexual crimes. In 2016-17, four in every five victims of other sexual crimes were female, and the vast majority of perpetrators were male.

Alongside that research, the Solicitor General for Scotland and I announced on 26 September our intention to establish an expert group on preventing sexual offending involving children and young people. Earlier in September, Alison Di Rollo had hosted an education summit, at which it was noted that cases reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service that involved a sexual offence committed against a child by another child rose by 34 per cent in the five years to 2015-16.

As the Solicitor General said, those disturbing and depressing cases can give rise to profoundly difficult, as well as important, decisions for prosecutors, in relation to the criminal law and the public interest. They have consequences for the accused, for the complainant, for the witnesses, for their families and for our society as a whole. They have consequences whether or not criminal proceedings are taken.

In recent years, we have come to understand more about the relationship between trauma and adverse childhood experiences and outcomes such as offending and imprisonment. There is a growing body of evidence that one of the most significant factors in predicting whether a child will commit criminal offences in the future is contact with the criminal justice system at an early age.

Prevention is undoubtedly preferable to prosecution, albeit that we recognise that for the most serious cases prosecution will be required. We need to understand better why young people—predominantly males—are motivated to behave in such a way. We need to understand better how we can prevent sexual offending, in order to minimise risk of harm and the number of victims.

Considerable effort is being exerted across Government, including national campaigns around child sexual exploitation, our national action plan on internet safety, and our “Equally Safe” strategy. However, we need a fresh impetus, armed with the very best evidence and the most useful tools, to prevent this type of offending.

The expert group, with its focus on prevention, education, health and wellbeing and child protection, and with a significant justice interface, will identify the further steps that are needed if we are to better tackle and ultimately prevent such offending.

I am pleased to announce that Catherine Dyer will chair the expert group. Catherine's background as Crown Agent and chief executive of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, and her role in chairing the independent child protection system review, mean that she is uniquely placed to lead on this vital work. She will ensure that the expert group examines the necessary issues with independence, rigour and a fresh eye. I know that she is very mindful of existing policies and programmes and of the interactions between existing systems.

The expert group will bring together professional and academic expertise from justice, education, child protection, health and the third sector. Its work will identify fresh actions to better prevent sexual crime involving children and young people and to mitigate the harm that it causes. The group will consider the implications of the recent research and other evidence and relevant data. It will conduct an assessment of existing policies, interventions and programmes, and it will look at the impact of wider societal and technological changes. It will draw on lessons from preventative work on violence reduction and will link strategically with other developments across justice, education and health.

I should point to the good work that is already being done by the Government and partners that contributes to this agenda. For example, we are working closely with the children's sector to implement the actions that are outlined in the national action plans on child sexual exploitation and internet safety. Health and wellbeing is at the heart of children's learning, and schools are supported through guidance on relationships, sexual health and parenthood education. That is an important part of the school curriculum in Scotland.

However, we know that, in the modern world, we need to ensure that children and young people are provided with learning that fits the ever-evolving digital world. As most members will be aware, the Government has commissioned a review of personal and social education as part of its mental health strategy. It is looking at the delivery across our primary and secondary schools of a wide area of subjects, including relationships, sexual health and parenthood. The review commenced earlier this year and it is expected to provide recommendations to ministers by the end of 2018.

“Equally Safe”, the Scottish Government's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, has promoted a concerted effort by relevant sectors to deliver a holistic response to tackling violence against women and girls. It puts a decisive focus on prevention while ensuring that we have effective

services for survivors and that perpetrators receive the strongest possible response.

Over the next few weeks, my Cabinet colleague Angela Constance will publish a delivery plan to further focus our efforts. As well as building on our strong progress on strengthening legislation and building the capacity of services, it will recognise and focus action on the fact that preventing violence requires the underlying attitudes and inequalities that create the societal conditions for that violence to be eradicated.

We are investing in programmes that promote internet safety and explore the online behaviour of young people, including Police Scotland's choices for life peer mentoring programme, the mentors in violence prevention programme, Stop It Now! Scotland, and Sacro's challenging harmful online images and child exploitation programme. In addition, funding from the violence against women and girls justice budget is supporting Rape Crisis Scotland to deliver a sexual violence prevention programme across a number of local authorities in Scotland. That work is vital in helping to deepen young people's understanding of consent and healthy relationships.

The remit of the expert group extends to all sexual offending and harm involving children and young people, including situations in which a child is the victim or the perpetrator—sometimes, they might even be both—and there will be a particular focus on cyber-enabled offending. The group's remit will not focus on adult perpetrators of sexual violence. The criminal justice system and the multi-agency public protection arrangements will remain at the core of protecting the public from sexual offences where the perpetrator is an adult.

The expert group will map and raise the visibility of existing approaches, identify gaps and explore best practice, including insight from other countries.

Young people must be involved in that work in a meaningful way. We will invite the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot to be part of the expert group, and YouthLink Scotland can provide insight from a young person's perspective, drawing on the success that we have had with the no knives, better lives model.

Given the research outcomes, a gendered analysis will be a significant component. When it comes to cyber-enabled sexual offences, it is clear that young women and girls are predominantly the victims, whereas young men and boys are predominantly the perpetrators.

The expert group will be focused and time limited. It is expected to conclude its work by the end of March 2019.

A preliminary meeting with a number of third sector organisations to scope membership took place on 30 October. I thank Rape Crisis Scotland, Stop It Now! Scotland, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Barnardo's Scotland and others, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Police Scotland, for supporting those discussions.

We want to draw on all available expertise. That will include the Coalition of Care Providers in Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland, Stop it now! Scotland, child protection committees Scotland, the national child protection leadership group, Education Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and a nomination from the chief medical officer for Scotland. Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service will also be part of the group. We will invite the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland to nominate a member. We will also draw on academic expertise from the specific areas that are being considered. The chair will have flexibility to invite others such as Zero Tolerance and child exploitation and online protection command to augment the work of the group.

I hope that members will welcome the direction being taken through the expert group and support the focus on a preventative approach to reducing the number of children who are involved in sexual offending as victims and as perpetrators

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you. We will now take questions, starting with Michelle Ballantyne.

**Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I am also grateful to the cabinet secretary for prior sight of his statement.

This is an extremely important issue and one that challenges just about everybody who works with young people in our communities. There is no doubting that the cabinet secretary has covered a wide range of approaches that are being taken at the moment. I am particularly glad to welcome the pulling together of all those things with an expert group to look at how we go forward and how we ensure that we are doing the right things—the things that will make a difference to the young people who are affected by this issue.

Establishing the expert group is the right way to go. I particularly welcome the appointment of Catherine Dyer to chair it, which she is very appropriately qualified to do. I really look forward to the group's findings and what it has to tell us.

I have two small questions regarding the group. First, the cabinet secretary mentioned the involvement of young people, which is absolutely critical, but there was no mention of families. Will he ensure that families are also involved in a meaningful way? Obviously families have a lot to

contribute, and it is very important that we hear how they cope with their young people and how they can get involved in preventing the sort of experiences that their young people might encounter.

Secondly, will the expert group engage with online service providers—particularly social media—to ensure that we have a robust approach to learning in an online digital world?

**Michael Matheson:** I am very grateful for the member's comments. Let me pick up on the two issues that she raised, the first of which was the involvement of families. There will be scope for families that have been affected by one of their members being either a victim or a perpetrator to have some input into the process. We are not specifying how that will be conducted, as that will be for the expert group to devise, together with the organisations that will support it in taking forward this work.

That leads to the member's second point, on engaging with online service providers. We have not specified that the expert group must do so, but I think that it would be very difficult for the group to do its work without considering service providers and the role that they can play in helping to support young people who are dealing with these issues.

The member may be aware that the Scottish Government is already involved in the United Kingdom body that deals with online service providers. We continue to have input into that process at a UK level.

I have no doubt that Catherine Dyer and the expert group will want to consider the nature of their engagement with online service providers, as and when they consider it appropriate. There is no doubt that those providers have an important role to play in helping to address some of the concerns that are likely to be highlighted in the course of the expert group's work.

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for the advance copy of the statement.

The issues that are addressed by the statement are complex and MSPs have increasingly raised concerns in the chamber over sexual offending involving children and young people. We have seen a rise in sexual offences committed by a child against a child in recent years, and I welcome the Solicitor General's initiative in highlighting the consequences of that behaviour and today's statement. I welcome Catherine Dyer as the chair of the expert group and I wish her well in the work ahead.

Will the cabinet secretary expand on the remit of the group? He says that there will be a particular

focus on cyber-enabled offending. That is welcome, as it is a significant contributor to the increase in offences and it could be seen as an area that could be addressed with better education and information. However, it is also important that we focus on children and young people who display a greater degree of harmful sexual behaviour. Will the cabinet secretary say a bit more about what work the group will undertake in that area?

At the start of his statement, the cabinet secretary talked about how the whole-system approach to offending is working, with referrals down by 80 per cent. Why does he feel that that approach has not been as successful in the area of sexual offences?

**Michael Matheson:** I am grateful for Claire Baker's welcome for the statement and the approach that we are taking in this very complex area, which is emerging quickly as technology develops. The group's remit will be published today and I am happy to send a copy to the member. The document, which should be available in the Scottish Parliament information centre, sets out in broad terms the remit of the expert group. The remit is not limited to cyber; it will look at the wider issues, as I mentioned in my statement.

Claire Baker highlighted the issue of young people who may be exhibiting behaviours that are a matter of concern. It is important that the expert group will focus not just on cyber matters, but on the wider issue of young people as both victims and perpetrators of sexual crimes, including whether the measures that are in place are appropriate. A key part will be mapping what is in place at the moment, and looking at whether those arrangements are effective and where there are gaps that need to be addressed more effectively, such as picking up on such behaviour at an earlier stage and earlier intervention.

In her third point, the member raised issues around the success that we have had in tackling youth offending, in particular the reduction in the number of young people who are referred on offences grounds to the children's reporter system. One issue from the research that was published back in September is the identification of those types of offences, because they often take place within a cyber environment, which is much more difficult to identify. We have a concern about whether young people have an understanding of the need to report those matters and also the way in which they are then investigated.

The response that we have had in the past around the whole-system approach has been more about a practical intervention. One area in which we need to get better is ensuring that young people are equipped with the skills to know what is

unacceptable and to seek support and assistance. Some of the cyber-enabled sexual offences that we are finding are not as visible as some of the other behaviours among young people—that is part of the challenge that we will face in the future. For anyone who is a parent of young children and young people, it is not necessarily about a perpetrator coming into the house or an environment to have an impact on a child. That influence can be exerted through their phone or a computer in their bedroom or elsewhere at home. That is not as visible and provides greater challenges for our law enforcement agencies and those who could intervene at an early stage if we could identify where the issue starts to emerge.

**The Presiding Officer:** I appreciate that this is a sensitive subject. I draw the cabinet secretary's attention to the fact that there are 10 questions, if we can get through them.

**Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP):** Does the cabinet secretary agree that there is nothing inevitable about children and young people engaging in harmful sexual behaviour? Does he agree that the education that they receive on this issue should focus on more than just what is lawful and is not lawful, but on what is healthy, safe and respectful?

**Michael Matheson:** I agree that what is important is that we help to enable children and young people to have mutually respectful, responsible and confident relationships. A big part of the work that is being done as a result of the review of the PSE approach within schools is to look at how to make sure that it is embedded much more effectively.

Part of the challenge is ensuring that we have a much better understanding among those in our education system and our wider public services of the risks that young people are exposing themselves to, so that they can help to support young people in addressing some of those issues. They also help to support young people in understanding mutually respectful, confident and responsible relationships. What do such relationships look like in the cyber world, and how do we enable people to understand that and to have that confidence and responsibility? I agree with the member, and I think that an important part of the work that the expert group will take forward will be about how to embed that more effectively in our education system.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** The cabinet secretary is quite right to say that the expert group will consider the implications of research and other relevant data. Will the group look at the processes of collecting that relevant data? That point was raised in the Education and Skills Committee when we looked at personal and social education, and it was suggested that

perhaps the data was not always as accurate as it might be.

**Michael Matheson:** I suspect that the expert group will want to give consideration to that area. As I said, we want to take a preventative approach, and to do that effectively we need to ensure that the approach is also evidence based. Data is crucial to ensuring that a properly informed and evidence-based approach is taken, and I have no doubt that the expert group will want to give consideration to that.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for giving me advance sight of his statement. Any steps that are taken to prevent sexual offending against children and young people are to be welcomed. I am sure that the cabinet secretary will agree that education has a key role to play in that.

The Equalities and Human Rights Committee, of which I am a member, recently carried out an inquiry into bullying and harassment in schools. I was particularly alarmed to hear evidence directly from young girls of sexual harassment and bullying, and of sexual shaming in schools. I was even more alarmed by the culture of acceptance among some pupils. Accurate recording of such incidents, support for victims and zero tolerance in our schools are all essential, as are training, support and guidance for all our teachers. Can the cabinet secretary give more detail of the specific steps that he will take to ensure that there is joint working across portfolios, and sharing of good practice, to counter the alarming evidence that we heard in committee?

**Michael Matheson:** I am aware of the work that has been done by that committee, which is helpful in shining a light on some of the issues around bullying. We are clear, as a Government, that we must take bullying seriously, and we expect our local authorities to ensure that they have appropriate measures in place in education to address those issues quickly when they arise. Early intervention is the key to preventing bullying from escalating. We expect all our local authorities to have anti-bullying strategies in place, and for those strategies to be effectively implemented in order to prevent that type of behaviour from developing.

The challenge is that the nature of bullying is changing, and the purpose for which some bullying is taking place is changing, as well. It is not just the bullying such as may traditionally have taken place in the playground or the school line, when I was at school. Bullying can now take place online, while the person is at home on their phone or on a computer. Part of the work that we are taking forward with the national action plan is to tackle such issues by equipping young people with the skills to manage and deal with them online.

It is important that we are also helping to educate parents, teachers and support staff to recognise that cyberspace can be an environment in which children are even more susceptible to bullying, and to learn what can be done to ensure that young people know that they need to report bullying as early as possible.

I have no doubt that the expert group will want to give some consideration to the existing arrangements that we have in place to deal with those issues, and to how those can be improved and developed.

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):** As many members will be aware, this week is anti-bullying week. Bullying is something that too many of our young people still experience, and it may lead to some youngsters feeling pressured to take part in sexual activity that they may or may not realise could constitute a sexual offence. What efforts are being made to tackle bullying of all sorts in our schools? I remind members that I am the parliamentary liaison officer for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.

**Michael Matheson:** I am conscious that the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills is also in the chamber, so I had better ensure that I get his policy on bullying right. However, I know that, as a Government, we take a robust approach to tackling bullying. As I mentioned in my response to Mary Fee, we expect local authorities to have developed and implemented anti-bullying policies, which should be reviewed and updated regularly in consultation with parents and pupils. It is important that the policies also consider at local level bullying that takes place in cyberspace. That will be important going forward. I have no doubt that the expert group will want to consider the existing policy framework on bullying.

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):** I thank the cabinet secretary for early sight of his statement. The Scottish Green Party welcomes the proposals in it.

I have a question about one small part of the expert group's remit. The cabinet secretary said that it would not focus on adult perpetrators of sexual offences. The definition of "adult" can be from 16 years old to 18 years old. What regard will be given to that? Many adult offenders offended as juveniles. We want to capture as much information as possible.

**Michael Matheson:** That question specifically relates to research that was commissioned last year and published in September, which concerned young people rather than adult perpetrators.

The group will not consider the actions of, and areas relating to, perpetrators of sexual offences

who are over 18. It will specifically examine the needs of children and young people as perpetrators and victims because there has been very significant growth in the area. To extend the remit further would lose that specific focus—in which we have seen growth over the past couple of years—and, in particular, on the cyber nature of the issue. The focus is specifically on that age group and, as I mentioned in my statement, the way in which we deal with adult perpetrators of sexual crimes is through our MAPPA and the other safeguards that we have in place.

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** Following efforts by my party, the Scottish Government has committed to increase the age of criminal responsibility. Serious sexual offences that are committed by people over the age of 12 should naturally be dealt with severely, but will the Government consider using the legislation on the age of criminal responsibility to ensure that children who commit minor sexual offences in their early teens as a result of their immaturity are not haunted by a criminal record of that nature for the rest of their life? Will it consider a limitation that will expunge such minor offences from their records after a period?

**Michael Matheson:** Alex Cole-Hamilton tempts me to pre-empt the expert group's work on the issue. As I mentioned at several points in my statement, our key focus is on preventing young people from becoming involved in such activity in the first place. In doing that, we can reduce the number of perpetrators and, importantly, the number of victims. However, such actions have a range of consequences; for example, our prosecutors face dilemmas, as a result. That was a particular focus of the education summit that the Solicitor General for Scotland brought together, and which the Deputy First Minister addressed a number of weeks ago.

I have no doubt that the expert group will want to consider the issue that Alex Cole-Hamilton has raised, given the potential implications that prosecuting young people on such matters at a young age could have on a large part of their lives and their future opportunities.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary confirmed that young people will be involved in the expert group's work. Will there be a direct opportunity for young people who have been affected by sexual offending to engage with that work? If so, will their voices help to develop services that are designed to support the victims and perpetrators of such offences?

**Michael Matheson:** It is crucial that young people have an opportunity to participate in the process. As I set out in my statement, a number of youth organisations and organisations that work

with young people will participate in the expert group.

Of course, there is a role for victims of sexual crimes to participate in the process, but that must be managed in such a way as to recognise confidentiality and to ensure that victims are confident about any participation that they may have. Such an approach has been facilitated in the past in other areas of policy: victims have been able to participate. I have no doubt that the expert group will want to engage with youth organisations to facilitate such engagement in a sensitive way that protects the anonymity of the victims of such crimes and the confidentiality that is necessary in dealing with them.

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** Regarding the welcome focus on prevention, can the cabinet secretary confirm whether the expert group will explore the option of taking the message directly into schools as, for example, the excellent play “The Balisong” does as part of the no knives, better lives programme that he referenced?

**Michael Matheson:** As I mentioned in my statement, one of the areas that I believe the expert group can consider is the work that we have taken forward on tackling violence in our schools and among young people. The no knives, better lives campaign is part of that, and the play “The Balisong”—which I hope Liam Kerr has had the opportunity to see—is an effective way of getting across the message to young people, alongside the work that we do with mentors on violence prevention and with Medics Against Violence. That model has proved to be effective, and there are lessons that can be learned about working with young people to tackle issues around sexual offences.

**The Presiding Officer:** I apologise to Rona Mackay, but we have run out of time for questions.

## Migration

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-08828, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on migration.

14:57

**The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan):** Migration might not be an issue that politicians on the United Kingdom political stage leap to make speeches about—and, sometimes, when they make speeches about it, they might have been better served by saying nothing. However, in Scotland, migration is an issue that this Parliament simply must engage with, for the good of our economy and our communities.

Historically, Scotland has been a country of emigration rather than immigration. People left Scotland to build their futures elsewhere, and those individuals made significant contributions to the new nations to which they travelled. However, clearly, emigration had an impact on our population. A country cannot export its young people in huge numbers for two centuries without some demographic consequences. It was concern about population growth—or, rather, the lack of it—that led the then Labour-Liberal Democrat Administration to develop the fresh talent initiative. The then First Minister, Jack McConnell, said:

“Scotland has a long tradition of welcoming new people, just as huge numbers of Scots have been made welcome in other countries across the world, in which they have settled and thrived. We are determined to continue and further improve on this tradition.”

That is an aspiration that I think we all share across the chamber, as we share a vision of Scotland as an open, inclusive, diverse and tolerant country. Unlike the UK as a whole, which experienced net inward migration in the 1950s and 60s, only since around 2001 has Scotland has been a nation of net in-migration. That was driven in large part by the European Union citizens who have chosen to come to live and work in Scotland and make their homes here.

Last week, the Scottish Government published clear evidence setting out the positive impact that citizens from other EU nations have had on our economy and our society. EU citizens are making a vital contribution to our economy. They are driving our population growth and ensuring that we have the workers to meet the needs of businesses and the public sector.

Some 128,000 EU citizens aged 16 and over are in employment in Scotland—5 per cent of total employment. We cannot contemplate losing even 5 per cent of our workforce. Our unemployment



rate is 4.5 per cent—lower than the UK average of 4.6 per cent—and the employment rate in rural areas is significantly higher than in urban areas, although that reflects the fact that people in rural areas traditionally move out of those areas when they seek work.

The evidence that we have published sets out the positive impact of EU citizens in specific sectors in the Scottish economy. Let me take one example. Tourism generates around £34 billion in gross value added, and in every year since 2011 it has experienced year-on-year growth in gross value added and turnover. Tourism delivers employment and economic development in some of our most remote locations and sustains often fragile communities such as those that Mr Russell and I represent. It is a sector that is heavily and increasingly dependent on workers from other EU countries. According to the annual population survey, in 2016 there were approximately 17,000 EU citizens working in tourism in Scotland—around 9.4 per cent of all those working in the sector, and in the accommodation sector that rises to 15.3 per cent.

The industry-led national tourism strategy, tourism Scotland 2020, sets out a clear ambition for Scotland to become the destination of first choice for a high-quality, value-for-money and memorable customer experience. To grow the sector and deliver that ambition, we need a skilled workforce. While the tourism skills investment plan seeks to support those skills and their development, we also need the skills and experience of EU citizens.

Scotland is home to a vibrant digital technologies industry, with more than 1,000 companies working in the sector—a sector that contributed £5.1 billion in gross value added to the Scottish economy in 2015. Scotland's computer programming and consultancy businesses alone employed 3,000 EU citizens in 2016, representing 5.8 per cent of all the employees in those businesses. The sector is crucial for future growth, but it is a sector that is dependent on specific specialist skills and experience. According to a report published by Ekosgen this year, 37 per cent of businesses in Scotland have recruited digital technology skills internationally.

I am at risk of listing sectors: there is also manufacturing, which employed 180,000 people in 2016, accounting for 7 per cent of total employment in Scotland. Some 16,300 EU citizens were employed in the manufacturing sector in 2016.

Last month, we debated the impact on musicians and the music industry of withdrawal from the European Union. As members discussed in that debate, artists from overseas contribute to our festivals and events, while Scottish artists are

able to take their work to audiences throughout the EU.

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** I am sure that the minister will come to the food and drink sector, which is very important in my constituency. There are already signs that, because of the failure to give a guarantee about how many workers we will get into the country, some businesses in the sector in my area are thinking about not going forward with investment that they had planned. Does the minister have any evidence of that happening in the rest of the country?

**Dr Allan:** I readily agree that we need to provide certainty to people working in all sectors. Moreover, I very much agree that we should remember the importance of people from other EU countries working in the food sector and do everything possible to ensure that they understand that the Scottish Government and, indeed, this Parliament recognise their right to be here and welcome their presence in our society and our economy.

I have mentioned a few sectors and I am happy to mention the food and drink sector, too. The issues highlighted in those sectors are replicated across the Scottish economy, in businesses and in the public sector. Last week, I visited the medical physics department at Edinburgh royal infirmary. There has already been significant publicity about the crucial role that EU citizens play in our health service. The Nursing and Midwifery Council has indicated that approximately 5 per cent of nurses on its register trained in the EU; UK-wide, that equates to some 33,000 trained nurses. However, the president of the Royal College of Nursing has noted that since the EU referendum, there has been a 96 per cent drop in nurses from other EU countries registering to practise in the UK. I will say that again: since the EU referendum, there has been a 96 per cent drop in nurses from other EU countries registering to practise in the UK. The evidence that we published last week provides clear information on our reliance on EU nationals who are clinicians, dentists and allied health professionals. I will focus briefly on the challenges that face not just that sector but our rural economy.

Migration can be particularly important for our rural communities. Although the number of individuals involved might be smaller, the impact of EU citizens and their families can be hugely significant. In the chamber last week, Richard Lochhead raised concerns about the importance of immigration for various sectors, including teaching. As we have heard, sectors in rural areas that are most reliant on non-UK workers include food and agriculture.

When I appeared before the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee last

week, I was asked what was unique about Scotland's needs, and I would emphasise the crucial economic impact of many of the industries that I have been speaking about, especially in our rural communities, and the disproportionate impact that the loss of small numbers of key individuals can have on small economies and communities.

Scotland's demographic profile is simply different from that of the rest of the UK. Scotland's population growth over the next 10 years is projected to come entirely—100 per cent—from migration, with 58 per cent from net international migration and 42 per cent from the rest of the UK. The comparative figures for the UK show that only 54 per cent of population growth will come from migration. Scotland's figures diverge significantly from those for the rest of the UK, and it is a divergence that we as a Parliament must address.

Our population is ageing. We should welcome the fact that people are living for longer, but if we are to ensure that we provide those people with the support that they deserve, we need to maintain a healthy working-age population. The working-age population is currently projected to increase by 1 per cent over the next 25 years. However, in a scenario of zero EU migration, the working-age population in Scotland is projected to decline by 3 per cent over the same period. It is simply impossible to overstate the critical role of migration in Scotland's future growth and prosperity.

As I said, I gave evidence last week to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, and I thank the committee for the work that is doing in this area. The committee's report notes that there is

“broad consent across Scottish political parties, businesses, trades unions, employers associations”

and

“universities”

about the contribution that migration makes to society in Scotland.

There is much about this debate that I hope unites us. Approximately 209,000 EU citizens live in Scotland. Each of those individuals makes not just an economic contribution but a social contribution. They are our neighbours, our friends and our family, and they enrich our communities. I invite everyone in the chamber to recognise the vital contribution that those people make to Scotland and to send a message to them that we value them and their contribution, and that we want and need them to stay in our communities.

I move,

That the Parliament supports the evidence in the Scottish Government's submission to the Migration Advisory Committee, which demonstrates the positive contribution of European citizens to Scotland's communities and economy;

notes that immigration is crucial to key sectors, including public services, health, higher education, rural industries and financial services; recognises that free movement has allowed UK citizens to travel, live and work across the EU freely; further recognises that EU migration has helped reverse a decline in the Scottish population and that EU citizens' right to live, work, study and invest in Scotland must be protected; notes that the Scottish Government should continue to use its powers to make Scotland an attractive place to live and work; acknowledges the findings of reports from the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee and the UK's Scottish Affairs Committee and All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, which agreed that the current migration system needs to change and reflect local circumstances, and supports calls for a differentiated, more flexible solution, which is tailored to meet Scotland's circumstances.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Jackson Carlaw to speak to and move amendment S5M-08828.1.

15:08

**Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con):** I hope to make a number of points in this afternoon's important debate and to draw them together as I conclude.

Last week, with the Presiding Officer, I attended the opening in my Eastwood constituency of the new Calderwood Lodge and St Clare's Jewish and Catholic joint primary school campus. It is attended by not only Jewish and Catholic children but a significant number of Muslim children, and it is the first of its kind in not just Scotland or the UK but the world. How remarkable an achievement is that? The UK chief rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, noted that pupils can learn all that is best about their own faith while recognising the joint humanity and values shared by all. Bishop John Keenan said in his remarks that he

“would copy many of the remarks of the Chief Rabbi.”

After all, he observed impishly,

“that is what we have been doing for thousands of years.”

Jewish, Catholic and Muslim children are studying and living together alongside significant Chinese and Sikh communities in a modern multiracial west of Scotland constituency of which I am immensely proud.

All those communities were themselves migrants to Scotland. The Catholics migrated here over several centuries, the Jews in the late 19th century, the Muslims and others in the 20th century and, today, many new refugees and others come here seeking hope, security and freedom in our care. There is no argument, point of debate or truth other than that all those who have settled here through the ages and in modern times have contributed immeasurably to our culture, economy, understanding and evolving sense of self and nationhood. Nothing would be more unnatural to us than to plan for a future in

which all that rich diversity was at risk or ruthlessly truncated. I could not and will not support that.

**Willie Rennie:** I am interested in what Jackson Carlaw said because, in her infamous speech to the Tory conference a few years ago, the Prime Minister said:

“While there are benefits of selective and controlled immigration, at best the net economic and fiscal effect of high immigration is close to zero.”

How does that contrast with the remarks that Jackson Carlaw has just made?

**Jackson Carlaw:** I made my position completely clear, and this debate is about what members of the Scottish Parliament think on the issues. I am grateful to Mr Rennie; it is nice to have his intervention. He was very unkind to me over the weekend when he compared me to a baked Alaska and said that I am fluffy on the outside and cold as ice on the inside. I was disappointed because we all know that little Willie’s own sponge has not risen for quite some time.

As the Conservative spokesman on health, I have spoken for years—starting long before Brexit was an acronym of sorts—about the challenges that Scotland faces from demographic changes. Added to the incredible pace of technological change with which they will be accompanied, it is increasingly possible that the world 20 years hence will be as dramatically different as the world of Waterloo and Napoleon is to us today. There will be as much change in 20 years as there was in the previous 200, the breathtaking nature of which we can barely contemplate.

The accompanying change in Scotland’s estimated population between now and 2039 will be equally as dramatic. There will be an 85 per cent increase in the number of people living in Scotland who are 75 years of age or older—from 430,000 to 800,000—which will be matched by a decrease in the working age population and a decline of 10 per cent in the number of people aged 16 to 24. If our population shift was represented by two simple images, our population today would be best imagined as a traditional pyramid and that of 2039 as an upended pyramid.

Brexit or no Brexit, the Scotland of 2039 and the years between now and then will require public policy to execute a dramatic shift. We need more people to come to, settle in and work in Scotland; to come here not just to retire, but to settle, work, live and retire. Although we unreservedly welcome the halt that has been achieved in population decline, we need a significant increase in the working age population.

As the motion and our amendment make clear, migration is not just critical for Scotland today, but will be increasingly critical for our public services—

especially health and education—rural industries, financial services and the hospitality sector, which is absent from the Government’s motion, unfortunately.

As migration is a central part of the solution that our amendment prefers, it is worth noting that although the number of those of pensionable age will increase by 28 per cent in Scotland, it is set to increase by 33 per cent in the rest of the UK. Crucially, the current forecast for the working age population is that it will rise by 11 per cent in the rest of the UK, but only by 1 per cent in Scotland, as the minister identified. Expressed in net terms, the non-working age population will increase by 27 per cent in Scotland and by 22 per cent in the rest of the UK. As public services around the UK—especially health and education—rural industries, financial services and the hospitality sector will all be searching for labour and skills, we are driven to the conclusion that we will need imaginative migration policies that meet the needs of vital sectors in Scotland, so we must identify, embrace and introduce such policies.

Last week, by chance, I met someone to whom I had not spoken for nearly 35 years. He now employs more than 1,000 people in Glasgow and the central belt in a range of restaurants and bars, any one of which members are likely to have visited. He is deeply concerned. Like me, he voted to remain and, like all of us, he is concerned that a Brexit agreement must be reached and must be reached soon. He is concerned, as we are, about labour shortages. He asks why many now shun the jobs that Scots were eager for when we were young. He asks what outcomes our education system has achieved for the economy. His sector of hospitality needs labour and, with the exchange rate at today’s values, it is not enough to look to the euro currency bloc in isolation.

Consequently, the Scottish Conservatives are not persuaded of the need to design a bespoke differentiated migration system for Scotland. In any event, it is clear that in such systems in Canada, Australia and Switzerland, although the regional policy exists, there is no unilateral ability to act. There is only an ability by liaison or co-ordination with the central administrative Government.

The final part of the motion with which we agree is that the Scottish Government should use its powers to make Scotland a more attractive place to live and work. It is on that duty that the Scottish Government is comprehensively failing.

Frankly, I do not understand the reasoning of the Scottish Government and others. On the one hand, they say that Brexit is doomed to fail and that the most unprecedented and severe storm is yet to hit Scotland’s economy and people. On the other hand, the SNP says that, uniquely, the way

to meet that storm is to increase taxation across Scotland, and to build on the reputation of being the highest taxed part of the UK.

Let us see the Scottish Government turning to boosting Scottish economic growth and making Scotland economically attractive across the rest of UK, where there is no currency fluctuation to impede inward migration to Scotland. It should concentrate on remedying its domestic policy failings, forgo its posturing on Brexit and work with the United Kingdom Government to achieve together a migration policy that will meet our economic sectoral needs across the UK and preserve access to the most important UK single market.

I move amendment S5M-08828.1, to leave out from “supports the evidence” to end and insert:

“notes the evidence in the Scottish Government’s submission to the Migration Advisory Committee, which demonstrates the positive contribution of migrants to Scotland’s communities and economy; notes that immigration is crucial to key sectors, including public services, health, higher education, rural industries, the hospitality sector and financial services; acknowledges the important role that migration will continue to have in addressing Scotland’s ongoing demographic challenges and skills gaps; notes the evidence that migration from both within and outwith the UK is critical to sustainable population growth in Scotland over the next 25 years; urges the Scottish Government to use its powers to make Scotland a more attractive place to live and work; acknowledges the findings of reports from the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee and the UK’s Scottish Affairs Committee and All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration; accepts the importance of maintaining the integrity of the UK single market, which is crucial for the Scottish economy, and supports calls for a solution that is tailored to meet sectoral needs in Scotland and the UK.”

15:16

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Migration is a major issue in its own right, but it is part of a bigger picture. Brexit means that we need new answers to a range of questions that Scotland faces today, including a new approach to immigration that reflects the different needs and priorities of the nations and regions of the UK.

It is not just last year’s referendum that sets the context for this debate; it is the changes of the past 20 years, since the Scottish people voted to establish a Scottish Parliament. As we have heard, 20th century Scotland was a country in demographic decline. More people left Scotland for other parts of the United Kingdom and the world than came here from elsewhere to make it their home. At the same time, our birth rate was in decline and our death rate remained relatively high.

Turning that around has been one of the great achievements of the devolution era. Population

decline has been replaced by population growth since the turn of the century. That is not just about migration, of course. Progress in tackling the big killer diseases and reducing mortality in most of Scotland have also played a part. Nor is it just about devolution or the policies of devolved Governments in Scotland. The decision not to put quotas on immigration from new EU member states in 2004 has been critical to Scotland’s ability to grow our population ever since. That was a decision by a Labour Government at Westminster. As a result of that, thousands of people from Poland and across the European Union have come to Scotland. Some have come to earn money and broaden their CVs before they go home again, but many have come to make a new life in this country for themselves and for their children. Their contribution to the economy and cultural life of Scotland has been invaluable.

The rights of EU citizens in this country must be protected, because they deserve no less. The benefits that they bring must also be protected, which is why we need an effective new policy to meet our future needs.

Addressing Scotland’s migration needs can be done within the context of the United Kingdom without undermining either the UK single market or a coherent UK immigration policy. Scotland’s devolved Government showed that with the fresh talent initiative of 2005, which, as the minister said, was designed to retain more international graduates from Scottish universities as a key part of reversing demographic decline.

Brexit means that we need a broader approach now than we did then. Projections from Registers of Scotland and the Royal Society of Edinburgh are clear that we need more people, especially of working age, if we are to maintain a healthy demographic balance from now until 2040. If free movement from across the European Economic Area is going to be radically reduced, will need to develop a range of other initiatives without further delay.

At this stage, we do not need to pin down the details of what a post-Brexit immigration system will look like, but it is important to acknowledge that the status quo is not an option. In that respect, the Tory amendment does not quite take the opportunity to set out a distinctive Scottish Conservative agenda. It acknowledges the particular demographic challenge that Scotland faces, as Mr Carlaw did a few moments ago, but it proposes an exclusively sectoral approach to solving it.

That is a pity, given that just a few months ago Jackson Carlaw agreed with colleagues on the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee that a distinctive Scottish approach to

immigration policy after Brexit seemed a good idea.

It is important to note that some of that could already be put in place with very little change. The Scottish Government already has powers in relation to the reception and integration of migrants in Scotland. It could use those powers, in consultation and agreement with Scotland's local authorities, to codify the rights of migrants and ensure access to services. More could be done to promote Scotland as a destination for migrants from Europe and beyond and, again, there would be no need to alter the devolution settlement in order to do that. Rather, it would be a case of raising the profile of migration alongside trade in Scotland's representation overseas while continuing to work closely with British embassies and consulates in Europe and around the world.

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** I am interested in what Lewis Macdonald has said. Does he think that the problem that Scotland faces in not having enough people in the workforce is significantly different from the problem in the rest of the United Kingdom?

**Lewis Macdonald:** Mr Rumbles might be surprised by this, but I quote in evidence the comments that Mr Carlaw made, which highlighted the difference in the projected population growth of people of working age in Scotland compared to the projection for England and Wales. That shows a radical difference and, therefore, a real need for an approach that specifically recognises and addresses that demographic deficit.

Support from the UK Government will be essential in order to deliver some further objectives, but they are wholly compatible with common immigration rules for the whole of the UK. For example, it would be relatively straightforward to appoint Scottish members to the Migration Advisory Committee to reflect the specific needs of all sectors of the Scottish economy. The Migration Advisory Committee could readily agree to a fuller Scottish shortage occupation list in relation to tier 2 visas to give Scottish employers more of an input and increase the chance that visas will meet the needs of the Scottish economy. The case for a fresh talent initiative 2 speaks for itself. Alongside that, there could be parallel initiatives at other skill levels in the economy to address temporary or seasonal labour shortages and to do so in ways that secure opportunities for young people to come here to work, and to settle and raise families if they so choose.

Reversing Scotland's population decline has been one of the great achievements of the past 20 years. As an objective, it has broad cross-party support and it can be taken forward within an agreed UK framework. In the future, meeting the demographic challenge will need to be even more

explicitly a central objective of Government policy in a context where we can no longer rely on the free movement of European Economic Area citizens to address our demographic deficits. It is on that basis that we will support the Government's motion at decision time.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate, in which speeches of six minutes have been allowed for.

15:22

**Mairi Gougeon (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):** I am really glad that we are having the debate, because future policy on migration is a massive concern at the moment for the EU citizens who live here and for the businesses and industries that depend on them, and for free movement of talent coming from abroad.

As we have heard, the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee has been investigating the subject with great interest in our inquiry into the article 50 negotiations and our inquiry into a differentiated immigration system for Scotland.

To me, the matter is essentially quite simple. It is imperative that people continue to come to live and work in this country, so in order for them to do that, we need a system that reflects the specific needs of businesses and people in Scotland, which are different from the needs of those in the rest of the UK.

In the 45 years that preceded the turn of the millennium, Scotland's population was in decline. The fact that that trend started to reverse since that time was largely down to the welcome influx of migrants to Scotland, most notably from Europe, to the extent that we now have approximately 283,000 more people living here than lived here in 2000. That is an increase of 5.7 per cent. They are people who left their own countries, for whatever reason, to make a better life here in Scotland. Many came as students and stayed on, and many moved here because of the economic situation in their own countries, having recognised that there are opportunities for them here.

During the committee's evidence sessions, we heard from members of Fife Migrants Forum, who told us about their individual stories: we heard about their backgrounds, their lives here in Scotland and their fears about withdrawal from the EU, but we also heard about their hope that they will be able to continue to make lives here for themselves and their families.

Two weeks ago, we had a debate in the chamber on the EU negotiations, in which I raised my family situation. I am glad that I did so,

because since then I have been inundated with information from people who are in similar or worse situations. The information has come from people who have already left Scotland or who plan to leave because of the uncertainty about their future or, which is most hurtful, because they no longer feel welcome here.

If members have followed @The3Million or #500DaysInLimbo on Twitter, they will have seen story after story about people having lost work and homes, about the active discrimination and exploitative practices that are taking place, and about the lack of engagement and poor communication with EU citizens here on the discussions and negotiations that will affect their lives. It is really hard not to get angry at those stories and at the fact that we are now more than 500 days on from the referendum vote and there are still far more questions than answers on the future of EU citizens post-Brexit. That was made alarmingly evident in our committee's session with the Secretary of State for Scotland two weeks ago, in which no answers or assurances were forthcoming.

We are often told that the UK is within touching distance of a deal with the EU, but that means very little because we still have no idea what "settled status" will mean, and there has been no clarification of what the future will be for low earners, for people who are paid cash in hand, or even for the volunteers who come from the EU to work here—especially if we face a no-deal scenario, which grows increasingly likely by the day.

We need an effective migration policy because it is a fact that people who come to this country tend to be young, well qualified and hard working. Statistically, EU nationals are predominantly under 35 and have a much younger age profile across all age groups than Scottish nationals have. That means that they are net contributors to our economy, that they use fewer public services and that they contribute more to public services than they take out. That completely debunks the ridiculous myth that is continually perpetuated by the hard-right media and, in fact, by the Prime Minister, that those people are a drain on public resources. Many of the people who come here use their qualifications to work in our public services.

**Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con):** Does Mairi Gougeon agree that any deal with Europe needs to be a two-way deal and that we have to secure the rights of UK nationals who live in European countries? Does she agree that, as well as the UK Government needing to reach an agreement, the European Union has to come to the table and negotiate?

**Mairi Gougeon:** The EU is already doing that. I agree with Jeremy Balfour that we need to protect

the rights of UK nationals who live abroad—of course we do—but it is a fact that the UK Government is not going far enough to protect the rights of EU citizens here.

Universities Scotland has calculated that non-UK students contribute about £800 million annually to our economy. Professor Christina Boswell of the Scottish Centre on European Relations has stated that we should not be concerned

"with how to limit inflows ... but rather, the challenge of sustaining much-needed flows of EU nationals to fill jobs in sectors such as agriculture, services and construction."

Graeme Dey and I directly heard about that agricultural concern when we met NFU Scotland in my constituency last week. There are options for how we can achieve that.

The committee received from Dr Eve Hepburn a detailed report that outlined examples in which that already happens from across the world, and a number of different approaches that could be adopted. Some options would require further devolution of powers from Westminster, but some require only political will on both sides to make them happen. However, it is clear from the evidence that we received that the current system does not address the needs of our public services, businesses and other industries and sectors in Scotland, and that the industries and sectors that are being affected do not think that they can feed into the system in a meaningful way.

There is no doubt that the only way that we can provide a system that works for Scotland is by having a direct hand in designing and determining it. I hope that we can send one message, as a unified Parliament, to all the EU citizens who live and work here right now. We need to let them know that we are proud that they have chosen to make Scotland their home, that we welcome them, that we value them and that we will do everything in our power to protect their right to be here.

15:30

**Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** We are all agreed that the topic that we debate today is a vital issue that is at the forefront of Brexit discussions. Industries up and down Scotland are concerned about their workforce planning. Scotland also faces democratic challenges—[*Interruption.*]. I thank Tom Arthur: I meant to say that Scotland faces demographic challenges. I am encouraged by a sentence in the amendment, which is that Parliament

"urges the Scottish Government to use its powers to make Scotland a more attractive place to live and work".

Making Scotland an attractive place for migrants includes many levers, including a competitive taxation policy.

In the Scottish Borders, across Scotland and throughout the rest of the UK, the agriculture, hospitality and other sectors are concerned that the depletion in the number of EU migrants will negatively impact their businesses. Of course, there is more than an economic cost: there is a cultural cost, too.

According to the most recent census data, there is a sizeable Polish community of about 1,300 in the Scottish Borders. Its contribution cannot be overstated. Those people work hard, integrate well and add cultural diversity. In May, the Prime Minister visited Abbey Tool & Gauge in my constituency, which is a large employer where many Polish people are employed. The Borders is now their home.

In December, I will visit the Saturday Polish School Hawick CIC, which offers courses to Polish and English-speaking adults. It is a great example of how the Polish community does well at integrating while maintaining and promoting its own culture. I know that there is some anxiety among the community about its future as the UK leaves the European Union, so ensuring that Polish people continue to feel welcome in the Borders is an absolute necessity. Therefore, it is a priority—as the Prime Minister has made clear—that the rights of EU nationals are settled. We are close to settling those rights.

The Conservative amendment asks that Parliament

“accepts the importance of maintaining the integrity of the UK single market, which is crucial for the Scottish economy, and supports calls for a solution that is tailored to meet sectoral needs in Scotland and the UK.”

That is the right course of action. The wrong course of action would be to have a differentiated immigration system for Scotland. Academics and businesses agree with the Scottish Conservatives. A report published by the migration observatory at the University of Oxford states:

“From a technical perspective, it is therefore not clear that significant regional variation would lead to a better match between policy and regional economic needs. At the same time, regionalisation has an economic drawback, which is that a more complex immigration system would increase administrative burdens for its users, such as large employers who employ staff in more than one part of the UK.”

**Dr Allan:** Rachael Hamilton has outlined that she considers it difficult to contemplate regional or, indeed, national variation within the UK on this policy area. Will she explain why the UK Government—rightly—continues to talk more warmly about a slightly different solution for

Northern Ireland, and why that flexibility cannot be extended to Scotland?

**Rachael Hamilton:** The situation in Northern Ireland is unique; it is not applicable to Scotland.

Scottish Chambers of Commerce, in its response to the Scottish Parliament Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee’s inquiry on immigration, said that it

“does not believe that devolution of immigration powers to Scotland is necessary to achieve a business solution to migration targets, but sectoral and geographical factors are central to the ability of a UK-wide immigration policy to meet business need.”

Migrant labour needs in some sectors are the same throughout the UK. As I stated to the minister last week, the requirement for seasonal strawberry pickers in Angus is the same as it is in Herefordshire. The Prime Minister, in a recent response to Kirstene Hair MP on the need for seasonal migrant labour in her constituency, said:

“the Home Secretary has commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee to look at the needs of the UK labour market and to further inform our work as we bring those new immigration rules in.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 1 November 2017; Vol 630, c 822.]

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Rachael Hamilton:** I will, if it is quick.

**Ross Greer:** I will be very quick. It is the same question that I asked Rachael Hamilton in a debate two weeks ago. She has mentioned a number of sectors in which there are key shortages. They are low-wage sectors, so why does the UK Government propose minimum income thresholds?

**Rachael Hamilton:** The Scottish Government is trying to sign up people to the national living wage, but it recently expressed disappointment about uptake.

The director of policy at the NFU Scotland, Jonnie Hall, said that a bespoke immigration policy would mean

“some sort of checkpoint near Berwick ... and let’s not create another headache internally within Great Britain.”

Free movement of people in the UK single market is vital, particularly in my constituency where commuters move freely over the border daily. Indeed, the NFUS recognises that Brexit presents opportunities in recruitment from outside the EU. Currently, not being able to recruit outside the EU causes recruitment issues. Post-Brexit, the agricultural sector can recruit from non-EU countries with potentially more interest coming to Scotland. [*Interruption.*] That was a quotation from the NFUS; members are looking very confused.

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Rachael Hamilton:** I would like to make some progress, if the member does not mind.

The Food and Drink Federation Scotland has said that it would not support the addition of further levels of processing and assessment over and above those that currently exist at UK level, because that could add to processing times for visa applications. Furthermore, the use of a Scottish work permit could restrict movement of individuals in respect of the requirements of the industry and the permit holders.

A point that is often missed by those who call for a bespoke immigration deal is that it would not fix the skills shortage in Scotland. The Scottish food and drink sector has highlighted the need to raise attractiveness to new entrants, to encourage leadership and management excellence and to support the development of skills and growth in the workforce. Almost half the people in the sector's workforce are over 50 and are likely to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. As I have mentioned in a previous speech, in 2015, the tourism industry recorded that 27 per cent of employers had had at least one unfilled vacancy within the previous 12 months, and that 22 per cent of vacancies in hotels and restaurants were due to skills shortages.

**Dr Allan rose—**

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is coming to a close.

**Rachael Hamilton:** In my constituency, skills shortages are exacerbated by the numbers of young people who are leaving the area to seek opportunities. Neither are the vacancies there that are left by skills shortages being filled by EU migrants, who find the lure of big cities more attractive. A bespoke agreement will therefore not solve the problem that is found in all of Scotland—and the UK, for that matter. To do so, we need to focus on developing the skills in key sectors including tourism, hospitality—

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

**Rachael Hamilton:** —food and drink, and agriculture.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** So far, members have had a fair shot at running over time. Other speakers will have to stick to time a bit more.

15:36

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** Earlier this month, I made a constituency visit to Loch Arthur, which is a social enterprise and

sheltered community in Beeswing, near Dumfries, which is run by Camphill Scotland. Camphill is a global organisation that was founded in Scotland and now has 11 communities across the country, in which young people from European countries live and work on a voluntary basis beside people with learning disabilities for whom Camphill is their home. The organisation was founded in Aberdeenshire in 1939 by Karl Koenig, a Jewish Austrian paediatrician who fled from the Nazis to come here along with some of his students. He believed that everyone mattered and should be included, and that education could be therapeutic as well as inclusive.

Today, young Europeans make up 68 per cent of Camphill's volunteers. They are qualified in social work, occupational therapy or special needs education. Often, their short-term placement turns into a long-term commitment; they stay in Camphill and raise families there. That is all under threat if we leave the EU and if EU citizens who arrive in future—after Brexit, should it go ahead—are treated as third-country nationals. For example, in Loch Arthur, an American volunteer who worked in the bakery and supported residents in one of its houses was told to pack up and go because she did not meet the income criteria for UK residency.

Camphill is one example of the wider humanitarian contributions that EU citizens make to Scotland and the UK as a whole. People from the EU are volunteers, active citizens, good neighbours and social entrepreneurs. They are priceless and irreplaceable.

The Scottish Government's submission to the MAC puts a value on the contribution of working EU citizens: a very impressive £34,400 each year towards gross domestic product. Of course, and as I am sure the minister will agree, that is an underestimate: it does not include the unpaid work that many European citizens do.

The Scottish Government's submission to the MAC is welcome, but not surprising to me or to other members of the Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. As others have identified, our report pointed to the very serious workforce and demographic challenges that will be faced by Scotland should EU citizens stop coming to live and work here. We recommended that, to tackle that time bomb, Scotland needs to have a differentiated system of immigration—but of what kind? I am concerned.

We hear from the Conservatives that a UK approach is the way forward, but what I have heard of such an approach is very worrying. The UK Minister of State for Immigration, Brandon Lewis, told a fringe meeting at the Conservative conference:



“There will be an immigration bill in the new year”,

but the MAC, to which the Scottish Government and others have been told to submit their views, will not publish the results of its engagement exercise until next September, long after the immigration bill has been introduced. That leads me to ask whether the engagement exercise is meaningful.

It is worrying that a document that was leaked to *The Guardian* newspaper, which is said to be a draft of the immigration white paper, suggests that the UK plans for the bill are as far from the Scottish Government’s position as can be imagined. According to the document, the Government proposes a system of temporary residence permits for EU migrants post-Brexit and plans to remove entirely the right to settle in the UK.

Such an approach will exacerbate Scotland’s demographic challenge, as members said. The treatment of EU citizens as third-country citizens will be a disaster for voluntary organisations such as Camphill. The Camphill volunteers do not draw a wage, so they fail to meet the income criteria under current immigration rules.

The current immigration rules could have heartbreaking consequences for families if they are extended to EU nationals. At the moment, a UK citizen without dependent children who wants to bring their spouse to this country needs to earn £18,600. The threshold rises to £24,800 if the person has two dependent children. Last year, the migration observatory published its finding that

“40% of British citizens working as full-time or part-time employees ... earned less than the income threshold.”

The migration observatory found that the position for women is even worse: in childless couples, some 55 per cent of British women fall below the threshold, compared with 27 per cent of men, and 69 per cent of women fall below the threshold for families with two children, compared with 44 per cent of men.

The rule is heartbreaking. It is also deeply discriminatory. I think that we can all agree that it is totally wrong that, currently, people who have been born here and who have lived and worked in the UK all their lives cannot easily bring their American, South African or Indian husband or wife to this country. In future, the approach could well apply to someone who falls in love with a national from Spain, France or Italy.

It is worth remembering that the current system was approved by the Migration Advisory Committee. The MAC has no Scottish representative, and despite claiming to engage widely to inform UK policy, it is not accepting the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee’s invitation to come and meet us.

Evidence from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Unison and others suggests that the MAC is not responsive to Scottish needs and has poor-quality data from Scotland on which to work. That, in addition to the workforce planning and demographic challenges about which other members have talked in detail and interestingly, is a reason why Scotland should have a bespoke approach to immigration.

Even more important, we should introduce a system that is compassionate. We should take our lead from organisations such as Camphill, which was founded by European migrants who were determined to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable people in Scotland. We need an immigration system that values people not just in the monetary sense but for their priceless contribution to our society.

15:42

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Migration is a good thing. People need the freedom to move about and seek a better life for themselves.

It is crucial that we create opportunities for young people, to stop outward emigration and to encourage inward migration. In the Highlands and Islands, we have a history of emigration. Our history tells us of the clearances, when people were forced off the land that they worked, to increase the wealth of the landowning classes. People who could afford to leave did so, emigrating in large numbers to Canada, America and New Zealand, and taking with them their wealth and their entrepreneurial spirit. Those people were economic migrants, who sought a better life for themselves and their families. The economy of the Highlands and Islands still suffers from their loss, and because of that, emigration continues. Our young people leave, seeking better opportunities, because our economy has never fully recovered.

Vibrant economies depend on people, so depopulation creates a downward spiral, which needs to be stopped. Only with people can we build economies that will provide our young people with the bright future that will persuade them to stay. We urgently need to address depopulation, because inward migration is an economic necessity.

EU nationals tend to be young and ready to put down roots and start families—the very people our communities are crying out for. Many of the business sectors that are most prevalent across the Highlands and Islands are heavily reliant on migrant workers, whether for trawler crews or farm labourers. There is also a need for seasonal migrants for the fruit-picking and summer tourism

industries, which have long used international migrants to power the economies of otherwise vulnerable rural areas.

Although we recognise the need for inward migration, we must acknowledge that other parts of the UK do not need it. That is why we need to have different migration policies in different parts of the UK. Northern England and many parts of Scotland need inward migration, and we need to be able to put in place policies and rules that are different in order to suit the whole country.

The fact that 5 per cent of Scotland's workforce is made up of EU nationals means that they are crucial to our economy, but that is also true of people from other parts of the world. I was told by hospitality businesses in the Western Isles that they are facing great difficulty in recruiting staff. They are becoming more dependent on students who are home for holidays, but once those young people return to university, they are having to close their businesses, despite there still being many tourists around. As well as being a direct loss to those businesses, that represents a loss to the local economy. At the same time, I overheard tourists complaining about the number of places that had been closed and the impact that that was having on their holiday. We need to build up the hospitality industry by giving visitors a good experience, because if they have a bad experience, they will not come back again.

That being the case, I am surprised that we have had a number of high-profile cases in the Highlands and Islands in which foreign nationals—I am not talking about EU citizens—have been told to go home, despite the fact that they are making an important contribution to the economy. Some of the people who are being asked to leave are playing a crucial role in areas that are suffering from depopulation.

New Zealand faces a similar problem, in that its young people want to leave and it needs to encourage others to inward migrate. The New Zealand authorities spend much more time attracting people and supporting them when they arrive. They put them in touch with other families, who buddy them for years. That works as a way of attracting people to areas where they are most needed.

Brexit will impact on how people view the UK. Even if we give them the security that they need in order to stay, the backdrop of the uncertainty that has been caused by Brexit will put people off coming here. The RCN has said that there has been a 96 per cent drop in the number of nurses from EU countries coming to the UK, and we hear that almost a fifth of our EU doctors have made plans to leave the UK. Our rural health boards are struggling to fill posts, and a huge amount of public money is being wasted backfilling those

posts with expensive locums. Surely common sense needs to prevail to ensure that we are as welcoming as possible to people from other countries in order to fill our skills gaps.

We need to learn from countries that encourage inward migration and do it well. I have mentioned New Zealand, but we must also look at Australia, which appears to be attracting a high number of newly qualified doctors from the UK. Why is that? Many of the posts in question are based in areas that make our remote rural practices appear urban. What is Australia offering our new recruits that we are not? It might be offering them less pressure and more time for career development. If that is the case, we must find ways of replicating that to make our posts more attractive to our home-grown talent and to people from abroad. We must also look at quality of life, which is crucial for keeping our young people and for providing an attractive destination for those whose skills we need.

It is clear that we need inward migration. Rather than pick a fight with the rest of the UK, we must understand the needs and fears of people in the rest of the UK and make them understand ours. The Labour Party has pushed for a constitutional convention to look at how the differing needs of the UK can be met within the devolved structures. It is important to this island that we make the best of the strength that binds us while recognising and celebrating our differences.

15:49

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** I was attending the Royal Highland Show on the day that the outcome of the referendum on European Union membership emerged. As I drove home, I took a call from a prominent figure in Scotland's soft fruit sector. He was utterly aghast at the result and was already processing its potential impact on his industry, given its reliance on migrant workers. I committed to working with him and his colleagues to address the damage that Brexit might inflict on a sector that contributes more than £47 million a year to the economy of Angus.

Astonishingly, more than 500 days on from that vote, the question remains of exactly where we are in terms of the soft fruit sector—and indeed wider Scottish agriculture—having confirmed access to the workforce that it needs.

The UK Government is no further forward in providing the certainty, but we are certainly already seeing the consequences of the decision to leave the EU.

There will be those who point out that there is still adequate time for reaching a decision on freedom of movement and on whether special measures might be needed or implemented to

cater for the agricultural workforce or the rights of EU nationals who already live here. After all, we have been told that the UK Government wants to strike a deal on the status of EU nationals who already reside in the UK, and seasonal workers will still be able to come to the UK until March 2019.

That ignores two things. First, it ignores the continuing emotional toll being exacted on our fellow Europeans who have made Scotland their home—something that I was reminded of yesterday when a French constituent visited one of my surgeries seeking reassurance as to what the future might hold, not just for her but for fellow immigrants who would want to follow the path that she trod many years ago.

Secondly, in the case of seasonal agricultural workers, although they might be able to come here in the short term, will they still want to? The evidence is mounting that the answer to that question is no—with all the economic consequences that that carries for Scotland.

All of us are aware of reports that a shortage of migrant farm labour is emerging. Cornwall, which voted to leave the EU, has had particular difficulties. So too has the apple industry in England. What of Scotland? What has been happening here? When Mike Russell and I visited Angus Growers in Arbroath earlier this year, we spoke to some of the EU citizens who work there. We heard from those key contributors to the local and wider economy that they felt unwelcome as a result of the Brexit vote and that the collapse in the pound's value meant that coming here was less financially attractive. We heard that going to Germany, where their skills are wanted and they would be paid in euros, looked to be a better option for 2018. The fact that the minimum wage in Germany has subsequently gone up will only strengthen the pull to a country from which the commute home is far easier.

As the Scottish Government noted in its response to the Migration Advisory Committee's call for evidence, the demand for seasonal agricultural workers means that there is a risk that even the perception of the UK being unwelcoming—regardless of any actual barriers—could result in workers from EU member states choosing to go to other countries, such as Germany. That document also rightly highlights that the recruitment of local people alone could not address the problem, especially owing to the low unemployment levels in rural areas.

As I touched upon earlier, clear evidence is emerging that Brexit is already leaving its mark on the soft fruit sector.

**Willie Rennie:** Will the member give way?

**Graeme Dey:** Absolutely.

**Willie Rennie:** The member is exactly right about this issue. Does he also recognise that the soft fruit sector has grown massively in recent years, so that even if we wanted to go back to using only Scottish workers, there would not be enough of them because the industry is so much bigger now?

**Graeme Dey:** Willie Rennie is absolutely right about that.

The problem that is emerging is that fewer workers are turning up this year and then hanging around until the tail-end of the season, when they would usually have three days a week of relatively well-paid work and might use the rest of their time to tour Scotland.

I acknowledge that other factors might be at play. It has, for example, been suggested to me that a contributory factor to the lack of available workers at the end of the season is that the level of unemployment benefit now being paid in Bulgaria is linked to the earnings that are accrued in the three-month period prior to a person seeking such support. It might therefore pay Bulgarians to head home on the back of a period of full employment rather than what is available to them late in the year. However, Bulgarians make up only a small proportion of the migrant workforce, so that would only partially explain away the early departures.

What specifically has the impact been? One organisation that was cited in the Scottish Government's submission is Angus Growers. I am grateful to that organisation for allowing me to share with the chamber details of what has happened across its 18 farms this year.

Angus Growers needs 4,100 workers annually. This year a total of 347 seasonal employees either did not arrive or left early, giving little notice. That is 8.5 per cent of the workforce. The group has had to pay 35,580 overtime hours to address the labour shortages. The cost of overtime, training and transport between farms is estimated at a shade under £225,000. Sitting alongside that and despite the overtime spend, a total of £436,000 worth of fruit was either left unpicked or had to be downgraded to grade 2.

Presiding Officer, in total, those farms took a £660,000 hit, courtesy of having fewer workers at their disposal. If not entirely, that is certainly largely because of the Brexit decision. No one can reasonably suggest that things are going to get better, at least, not any time soon.

The NFUS believes that mechanisms to allow access to workers must be introduced, so that nothing impedes that access in spring 2019. It is not prescriptive about the solution, but one possibility is the reintroduction of the seasonal agricultural workers scheme, which was abolished

in 2013 after having been in place for 60 years. Scotland—indeed, the wider UK—needs those individuals with their skills and work ethic; a new SAWS would be a way to achieve that. The NFUS states that the previous SAWS restrictions, with quotas and people working for no more than six months, would need to be looked at, the latter owing to the expanded use of polytunnels, which has extended the growing season. When we refer to seasonal migrant workers in the context of soft fruit, we are talking about people who are now here for up to eight months of the year. A new SAWS would have to reflect those changed circumstances.

Presiding Officer, to conclude—

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

**Graeme Dey:** I have sought to be as measured as possible in laying out the situation that the industry faces, but there is no getting away from the fact that, unless measures to safeguard access to the workforce are implemented quickly, the industry will have serious problems to contend with next year.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Come to a close, please.

**Graeme Dey:** Beyond that, they could face decimation.

15:55

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I am delighted to take part in this debate on migration. The Scottish Conservatives value the significant contribution that migrants make to Scotland in our economy, our culture and our everyday lives. That great contribution should be at the forefront of our minds as we consider the options for managing migration as we leave the EU.

The vote to leave the European Union last year was not a vote against migration, but rather a vote for controlled migration. It is paramount for the future success of Scotland and the rest of the UK that we continue to welcome individuals to our economy: our health sector and our hospitality and tourism sector need those individuals and we know that. However, we need to ensure that the future system welcomes the best and the brightest from the whole world and not from one single continent. We should welcome migrants based on their skills and what they have to contribute to our nation, not on where they come from.

To those from the EU who already live and work here, the message is clear: we want you to stay. The Prime Minister has given her assurances that the right to remain will be offered to all EU nationals who have chosen to make the UK their home.

**Mairi Gougeon:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alexander Stewart:** Oh. I will take an intervention from Ms Gougeon.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Mairi Gougeon.

**Mairi Gougeon:** Perhaps Alexander Stewart has more information than we do. Will he respond to the points that have been raised about volunteers and cash-in-hand workers, on which there have been no answers and no assurances from the UK Government?

**Alexander Stewart:** I take exception to that question. The clear motivation behind the assurances is that we are trying to ensure that individuals who are here, remain here. That has been talked about on many occasions, and that is the way that we are moving forward.

In contrast, the current First Minister's position on EU migrants is somewhat muddled. In the 2014 referendum on Scotland's independence, Nicola Sturgeon cynically suggested that the future of EU migrants would be under threat in the event of a no vote. I will quote her:

"There are 160,000 EU nationals from other states living in Scotland ... If Scotland was outside Europe, they would lose the right to stay here."

That is a quote from Nicola Sturgeon. The SNP is therefore in no position to lecture others on the treatment of EU nationals.

We know that Scotland faces a number of demographic challenges, not least that the expected population increase is lower than that of the rest of the UK as a whole. The population is expected to increase by 7 per cent between 2014 and 2039, which is lower than the 15 per cent that we expect for the rest of the UK. That predicted population growth of 7 per cent would be sustained as long as net migration to Scotland remained at around 9,000 people per year. The reality is that, if current trends continue, net inward migration is projected to be the main contributor to Scotland's population growth over the next 25 years. Improving net migration and immigration also means encouraging those who are already living in Scotland to stay, which is well within the SNP's influence. Around 3,000 doctors have left Scotland since 2008, and we need opportunities and possibilities to retain professions that wish to remain and wish to stay here. We want to protect that, and the Scottish Government has a role to play in that. Making Scotland the highest taxed part of the United Kingdom is not the right way to go about making sure that that is the case.

**Dr Allan:** I am curious to know whether the member, hand on heart and in all seriousness, really thinks that the thing that is worrying EU citizens who are living here is the fact that there is a debate going on in this Parliament about the upper rates of income tax or about income tax as a whole. Does he really think that that might be what is influencing their decision whether or not to stay here at the moment?

**Alexander Stewart:** Everybody contributes to every part of that, but the money in someone's purse or wallet is vitally important. If the Government is going to tax people more, it will put them off coming to this country. Why should we in Scotland be subjected to that? It is not fair, and people see and understand that.

**Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP):** What stops people coming is a lot more than that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** Mr Arthur, behave yourself.

**Alexander Stewart:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. The SNP nevertheless seems to think that all of Scotland's demographic problems can be solved by a different migration system, but the assertions are quite the opposite and scrutiny has shown that. There are large bodies of expert opinion that have opposed the idea and are warning that it could have serious negative impacts on the Scottish economy. A report published by the University of Oxford's migration observatory, for example, states that regionalisation has an economic drawback and that a more complex system would increase administrative burdens, which would have an effect on businesses in the United Kingdom. There are many companies operating across Scotland that do not wish to see that happen.

We owe a debt of gratitude to migrants in Scotland for the immense contribution that they make to our nation. We need them and they need us. I am confident that any future immigration will reflect the fact that both Scotland and the United Kingdom will continue to be open and welcoming to those from around the world as we chart a new course for our country outside the European Union. I support the amendment in the name of Jackson Carlaw.

16:02

**Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** Most of us, I dare say, are or have been migrants. I have certainly been one myself. We are a country of migrants—too often leaving, not arriving. As the MSP for a very rural part of Scotland that still struggles to retain its population—as Rhoda Grant eloquently highlighted—I can say that we want more migrants. Plenty have left, and not enough have

stayed or moved in. That is an open invitation to anybody who is watching.

Yesterday, I was on a panel in Fort William answering questions from an audience, and the vast majority of questions were on depopulation and recruitment. That is partly because the new owner of the Lochaber smelter, Liberty, has just submitted detailed proposals for a new factory, which will support an additional 744 jobs either directly or through the supply chain. That is a whopping figure—744 new jobs for a town with a population of 10,000. It is great news, but now is not the time to make it harder for would-be workers.

If Lochaber is leading the industrial comeback, Skye is setting the bar for tourism—it is all happening in the Highlands. The vast majority of hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions have employees from outwith the UK, generally from EU countries. Demand for our glorious scenery and delicious food is already outstripping supply. We want more workers and more entrepreneurs, not fewer.

Debates on migration are usually couched in economic terms, and I have just done that myself, but I want to emphasise throughout my speech the human lives that are caught up in our increasingly polarising debates on the subject.

Migration is good: it is good for economic growth, and that is good for all of us, because when GDP goes up average incomes go up, absolute levels of poverty decrease and employment rates go up. Migration is good for our businesses communities, as the employment rate for EU nationals is higher than the overall rate for Scotland, and they are generally better qualified than we are too. Migration is good for our population growth, as all the projected population increase over the next 10 years in Scotland will be down to net in-migration, with the vast majority from outside the UK. That, of course, reflects what has happened over the past 10 years as well, with 88 per cent of population growth in Scotland coming from inward migration. That is a far higher figure than for the UK as a whole.

As has already been touched on, migration is good for our public services, and particularly the health and social care sector, which is the single greatest employer of EU citizens.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I thank Ms—

**Kate Forbes:** Forbes. [*Laughter.*]

**Jamie Greene:** I was waiting for the light on my microphone to come.

There is little to disagree with in Ms Forbes's comments, but I am interested to hear whether she has any views on how we could help to tackle

depopulation in the Highlands and Islands by encouraging more people who were born and bred there to stay or to return after acquiring qualifications. That is also part of the problem.

**Kate Forbes:** Yes, that is an excellent point. We are not saying that everybody who leaves school should stay, but after leaving school, every one of my peers at a Highland high school left the Highlands at the same time and few of them have come back.

There are several points. In Fort William at the moment, we need training opportunities. That is about careers and the first step from school into work. That is why we need training and why we need university provision—and the University of the Highlands and Islands has been fantastic in that respect. Secondly, we need career progression, and the more jobs that are available, the more scope there is for career progression.

The human element is the part that causes me most frustration—and, at times, anger. I know—I am sure that all our postbags are full of such stories—of couples who have been split up for months at a time. I am talking about newly-weds who return from honeymoon to be told that one partner's salary is not sufficient, or that their savings are not sufficient, and they cannot enter the country. That is followed by months of stress, worry and separation. It is cruel. They are not somehow bad people; they are dentists, naval architects and entrepreneurs—and those are just the ones I know about. My greatest fear is that, if freedom of movement is reduced for EU citizens, they will be subjected to the same steely, cold, unforgiving and suspicious approach from the Home Office.

Because of the removal of the post-study work visa, talented students are not coming in the first place. The graduates we need—the engineers and medics from India, Nigeria and other countries—are going to Canada, Germany and the United States. We—our society and our future—are the victims of the Government's very short-termist, ill-thought-through and destructive decision to cut the tier 2 post-study work visa.

At the end of the day, we are talking about people. That is perhaps best symbolised by the Zielsdorfs, a family with five children who bought and invested in the only village shop in rural Laggan and turned it into a thriving business. After just short of 10 years, to the mutual shame of the Home Office and the UK Government, they were deported. The last time that I drove past the shop, it was still shut and boarded up.

16:08

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** Scotland has benefited enormously from

migration, culturally, socially and economically. Having historically faced significant emigration of Scots to places such as America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, we have relied heavily on migration into Scotland over recent years to reverse that population decline, fill skills shortages and keep many rural communities in particular viable. For example, about one in six of our nurses and midwives was born abroad. For nursing assistants, the figure rises to one in five. One third of university academic staff have come to Scotland from somewhere else in the world. A huge number of EU nationals in particular work in our agricultural industries and live in our rural communities.

Healthcare, food production and education are core services and sectors that employ a disproportionate number of people who have come from outside the UK, both from the rest of Europe and from the wider world. Brexit poses a clear risk to those key sectors. The number of European nurses registering to work here has already dropped by 96 per cent, leaving NHS Scotland vacancy rates at the highest ever recorded. The National Farmers Union has reported a 29 per cent shortfall in seasonal workers, which is resulting in fruit literally being left to rot in the fields.

As Kate Forbes said, migration is not only about employment levels or economic contribution. People are not simply units of labour that are moved from one country to another depending on the needs of a ruling economic class. This is also about what kind of society we want to live in. Do we want to live in a society that is enriched socially and culturally by openness and free movement, or one that is on a closed, hostile little island, angry and isolationist, on the outskirts of Europe?

We value the freedom to move abroad and to visit, live in and work in other countries. After all, people who were born in Scotland have been doing that for hundreds of years and have spread all across the globe. It is only fair that we extend that same right to those who wish to come here and contribute to Scottish society. I know that that position is shared by many—most—of the parties in this Parliament and I believe that it is shared by most of the people of Scotland.

We are talking not just about remaining in the EU and benefiting from freedom of movement in Europe, but about increasing immigration from across the world, because we know the benefits. More accurately, we are talking about removing the unnecessary barriers and cruel systems that currently make up the UK immigration system for those who come from outside Europe. That is the mainstream position in Scotland, but we are unable to make that position a reality and to respond to Scotland's needs and values. Instead,

our migration policy is created at the UK level by a Government that is intent on creating a hostile landscape for migrants, in an atmosphere that has seen the debate poisoned and dragged so far to the right that a centre-left party can somehow think it acceptable to chisel “controls on immigration” into its own headstone. We have seen the UK Government enact heartless policies that do not respect people as human beings deserving of dignity. One of the biggest fears that has been voiced by the EU nationals in Scotland to whom I have spoken is that they will be treated in the same way that the UK already treats third-country nationals.

The hostile environment that has been intentionally created by the UK Government has seen the Home Office split families apart. The callousness at the heart of the UK’s immigration system has also been imposed on our refugee and asylum systems, which are run by that same Home Office. People who came to the UK as children have been forced to return to a country that they have never known and in which they have no family. Women and children who are at risk of female genital mutilation have faced deportation. It is now normal to see MPs routinely campaign against the deportation of constituents who are immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, including individuals who face serious harm or even death. It has been normalised, but it is not okay.

The issue of the responsibility to house asylum seekers is an example of the asymmetrical distribution of powers in the UK. The system involves the UK Government’s tendering process, with housing delivered by organisations that are far more interested in squeezing out extra profits than in treating people with dignity. Asylum seekers have been forced to live in slum-like conditions, in insecure, damp, dirty and rat-infested houses. Victims of abuse and traumatised people have been placed in houses without even a lock on their doors. Last January, a Westminster Home Affairs Committee report branded asylum housing a disgrace. However, in October, charities said that the UK Government was still to respond to the report’s findings. Despite our responsibility over housing policy for everyone else in Scotland, we are not in a position to help the asylum seekers who are placed here.

We need to restore humanity to the immigration system and create a system that is suited to Scotland’s needs and aspirations. To do that, we need to devolve powers over migration and asylum to the Scottish Parliament, where appropriate. There are already plenty of examples across the world that show how such systems could work. The Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee has commissioned research into that, as has already been

mentioned. Quebec and the other Canadian provinces, as well as Australian states, are examples of places that enjoy significant control over immigration. That allows sub-state bodies to sponsor visas and encourage migrants to settle in areas that are deemed to have low population growth or other specific needs. Under the Canada-Quebec Accords of 1991, Quebec has sole responsibility for establishing immigration levels in the province.

I would not pretend that there are no challenges to overcome in relation to the devolution of migration powers but, as other countries have demonstrated, it can be done. Further, it can be done in imaginative ways. The example of the Swiss cantons shows that levels of responsibility can be given to layers of government below the equivalent of this national Parliament. In Scotland, the debate must include our local councils and what their role in any devolved system could be. If the argument is about the specific needs of Scotland as a whole, much the same argument can also be applied to the specific needs of Dumfries and Galloway or Angus.

Greens believe in a world beyond borders. We believe that no human being should be declared illegal on the basis of nothing more than the patch of land they were born on and the patch they now live on. Scotland has long reflected that outward-looking, internationalist and welcoming approach. We just need the right powers at the right levels to make it a reality.

16:14

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** It seems that Conservative members of the Scottish Parliament have been determined to prove me absolutely right when I compared them with a baked Alaska at the weekend. For the benefit of those who were not at the conference, I compared them with a baked Alaska, because they are light and fluffy on the outside, but cold hearted.

Today, they have proved that exact point. They are light and fluffy—the amendment in the name of Jackson Carlaw says:

“immigration is crucial to key sectors, including public services, health, higher education, rural industries, the hospitality sector and financial services”.

They are cold hearted—Theresa May has said:

“there are thousands of people who have been forced out of the labour market, still unable to find a job.”

They are light and fluffy—the Conservative amendment goes on to acknowledge

“the important role that migration will continue to have in addressing Scotland’s ongoing demographic challenges and skills gaps”.

Meanwhile, Theresa May says that the benefits of immigration are “close to zero”—that is exactly what their Prime Minister said. So we see that Jackson Carlaw says one thing; and the Prime Minister says another.

I watched Theresa May’s speech at the Conservative Party conference and I saw the whole hall rise to their feet at the end of what I thought was a deplorable speech. That included one Ruth Davidson, who applauded every single word of what Theresa May said about immigration. Who is in charge of the Conservative Party? Is it Ruth Davidson, is it Jackson Carlaw or is it Theresa May, because I am sure that the immigration policy that Scottish Conservative MPs at Westminster will vote for is the one that Theresa May sets out and not the one that Jackson Carlaw has put forward today?

The verbal gymnastics do not stop there. The British Medical Association has warned that a third of EU general practitioners working in the NHS in Scotland are thinking of leaving in the wake of Brexit; 14 per cent have already made plans to go. On the high streets of Scotland, the Conservatives are campaigning about the fact that we will be 850 GPs short by 2021, but they seem to ignore the fact that their own Government is driving GPs out of the country. It is more verbal gymnastics from the Scottish Conservatives. EU citizens have been drip fed anti-immigration propaganda by the Conservative Party, and Brexit has reinforced that.

Graeme Dey made an excellent speech and some really important points about the real peril that is facing our fruit and veg sector. The food and drink sector has grown massively in recent years on the back of workers from the European Union, because we cannot get enough Scottish workers to work in that sector. The sector is hoping to double by 2030, to the value of up to £30 billion, but that will not be achieved if we are not getting workers to come to this country—and Theresa May’s policy is that she does not want them to come to this country.

The same applies in the universities sector. At St Andrews—my university—about 20 per cent of the grants and 10 per cent of the staff come from the European Union, but people are thinking about not coming here because of the future uncertainty. People will think twice about making a long-term commitment to travel across Europe to go to a university in another country if they think that that country will not welcome them. They will not take the risk of uprooting their family for another part of the European Union. That is why our universities sector is under threat, too.

In relation to GPs, universities and farming, we see that the impact of tightening immigration will be felt in the wake of Brexit, yet the Scottish Conservatives stand up and tell us that that is not

their policy. Well—I am afraid that it is their policy, because that is what they stood on in the Brexit campaign. The expectation is that, on the back of Brexit, there will be fewer foreigners in this country—no matter what the Conservatives said in the small print, that is the expectation; and that is the imagery—the symbols—that they sent out during the Brexit campaign. To stand here today and pretend that it is otherwise is to try to fool us, and we will not be fooled.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that this is not just a Scottish issue. Graeme Dey talked about workers down in England, picking apples in Cornwall for instance; and there are the daffodil pickers who start off on the south coast and work their way up to the north. Having a differentiated system will not necessarily solve the problem. What we need is a change of approach from the Conservative Government for the whole United Kingdom, so that universities in the whole United Kingdom, for example, can benefit. However, that is not what Jackson Carlaw is saying; he is defending a Conservative Government that is trying to drive down immigration in this country—which will hit our fruit and vegetable sector, our universities and our national health service—and he is backing the Conservative Government every step of the way.

**Jackson Carlaw:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Willie Rennie:** I am afraid that I do not have time to give way to Mr light-and-fluffy Carlaw, who is pretending to be something that he is not.

What we need to have is a proper debate about immigration in this country to ensure that we have the right level of immigrants coming in and working to grow our businesses, to defend our NHS, to care for our people in their homes and to ensure that we have a thriving economy. We will not get that with the Conservative Government.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Stuart McMillan is next, to be followed by Jamie Halcro Johnston.

16:20

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

“We still do not know anything, because it is not clear to us that we have a right to reside here permanently. We want to know that we will not lose our houses, our jobs or our human rights here. We do not want to be treated differently. We have made so many contributions to this country and we do not want to be discriminated against.”—*[Official Report, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, 28 September 2017; c 24.]*

Those are not my words but those of Katarzyna Slawek of the Fife Migrants Forum. Mr Stewart, who is not in the chamber now, said earlier that



there is certainty for all the EU migrants who are living here and—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Just for the sake of fact, I point out that Mr Stewart is in the chamber. He was just moving around a little.

**Stuart McMillan:** Okay. I will just carry on.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Sorry. That came out all wrong. [*Laughter.*]

**Stuart McMillan:** Yes, it did. I will carry on.

Mr Stewart, who has now taken his seat again, said earlier that there is certainty for EU migrants and that they know what will happen to them post Brexit, but I urge him to talk to his constituents in the region that he represents and to people from the Fife Migrants Forum. He should listen to their concerns and to every word that they have to say about them. People from the Fife Migrants Forum came to one of our Parliament's committees and told Parliament that they still do not know what will happen and that there is a huge amount of uncertainty for them. Mr Stewart is clearly not boasting to his constituents.

Also on that point, Mr Carlaw spoke earlier about economic policy. The Scottish Government's motion states that the

"Scottish Government should continue to use its powers"

over the economy, and I think that the Scottish Parliament should continue to do that. In addition, the Conservatives' amendment

"urges the Scottish Government to use its powers".

However, Brexit will hamper the Scottish Government in carrying out the economic policies that we want to see in order to make Scotland a better and more prosperous country. Certainly, the narrative from the Conservatives in the debate, not just today but in recent months, has been hugely confusing, as Willie Rennie highlighted very well a few moments ago.

There are a few points that have already been touched on in the debate. I will not go over all of them, but there are a few that people and members need to consider. First, EU nationals working in Scotland contribute an average of £34,000 each every year, which amounts to £4.4 billion per year. The current employment rate for EU nationals in Scotland is 76.8 per cent, which is 3.8 per cent higher than the figure for Scots in employment. Almost two thirds of EU nationals here aged 16 and above are employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants, public administration, education, health, banking, finance and insurance; and over one third—36.7 per cent—of EU nationals here have a degree-level qualification or higher.

As a nation, Scotland is far richer for having here people of all nationalities, including EU migrants, but some people use language such as, "Send them all back where they came from." If the EU migrants were sent back, Scotland's population would immediately decline, the economy would suffer and our cultural appreciation and understanding would deteriorate. It is abundantly clear that EU migrants have a positive effect on our Scottish economy, culture, sporting activities and learning opportunities, to provide just a few examples.

Another aspect that migrants help with is health, as has been touched on today. At present, EU citizens fill vacancies in hard-to-fill specialisms in the health sector, where there are shortages. Recent figures released by the Nursing and Midwifery Council confirm that, since Brexit, the number of EU nurses and midwives who are registering to work in the UK is declining—and not just by a wee bit. As the minister said earlier, there has been a 96 per cent reduction in the number of people who are applying to come to the UK to work in the health service.

Today, the British Medical Association shared the findings of a recent study that it undertook, which indicated that one in five European doctors working in the NHS in the UK is already planning to leave Britain due to Brexit uncertainty and 45 per cent of EU doctors are considering leaving the UK. Thankfully, the figures for Scotland are not as bad, but 34 per cent of EU doctors are considering leaving and 14 per cent have already made plans to leave. That is little comfort to Scotland, and it is one of the aspects of the Tory Brexit shambles that we now have to deal with.

It is not just EU nationals who are concerned about the impact of Brexit; employers are also concerned. The Scottish Government's recent publication, "Brexit: what's at stake for businesses", highlights the concerns of Scottish businesses about attracting and retaining EU staff, and their scepticism about replacing that workforce from UK sources.

I mentioned the Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, which has received evidence from businesses as part of its immigration policy inquiry, including stats from, among others, Skills Development Scotland. It outlined the main sectors that would be affected by Brexit and noted that the food and drink industry is most at risk, as more than 10 per cent of the current workforce are EU nationals. Further, every year in Scotland, 12,800 vacancies arise in digital technology roles, which is a skills gap that is currently partly alleviated by the recruitment of European staff.

Brexit is an absolute shambles. It is important that, on the issue of immigration, the Scottish

Parliament speaks with one voice to encourage people to stay here. We also need the UK Government to come to the table and to be clear that every single EU migrant is welcome to stay in Scotland because of what they contribute.

16:27

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Migration is an issue that cuts across a great deal of the work that we do in this chamber. Our population trends dictate how we deliver public services, whether communities are sustainable and how we plan for the future.

Migration into Scotland has been a force for good for much of our history. Individuals and communities have come from across the world and made Scotland their home, adding to the already existing diversity and richness of our culture. That is particularly the case in my region, the Highlands and Islands, which is now the preferred destination for many from the rest of the UK, the EU and around the world. Communities around the region are enriched by those who choose to make the Highlands and Islands their home and to bring their skills and experiences to a wide variety of sectors.

**Willie Rennie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** I would like to get on, if that is okay with Mr Rennie.

The UK will always welcome skilled migrants who want to come here to work, study, learn and contribute to our national life, and that principle is already embedded in our immigration system. However, it is likely that changes will have to be made to reflect the interests of all parts of the UK.

There are a number of specific concerns. For example, we have heard much about the issue with seasonal employment, which affects rural areas around the UK. There has been initial discussion about how seasonal work, particularly in agriculture, should be accommodated in our immigration framework, and I note that NFU Scotland has shown its willingness to explore arrangements that go beyond the EU27 countries.

To approach the prospective issues in detail, we need a greater range of accurate data. The economic impact of migration changes can be accurately estimated only if we know the current flows of migration—where people are coming into our economy and where they might come from in the future—and how individual sectors are affected.

My Conservative colleagues have spoken from a national perspective, but I will talk about my region. As Rhoda Grant said, the story of the Highlands and Islands has traditionally been one

of outward migration—not always voluntary, unfortunately—and we have long faced broader issues around depopulation. However, for a number of communities, that has become a reversing trend, though it remains a patchwork. Many of our issues spring from young people seeking to move away to other parts of Scotland or the rest of the UK. For many, the lack of opportunities in education or employment is not perceived but real. As a global city with a worldwide reach, London is an enormous part of Britain's wider economy and, in Scotland, there is a considerable pull to the economic hub in the central belt. There we have some of the finest universities and other institutions of learning in the world, as well as some major employers.

These are not criticisms; we should welcome having on our doorstep a major global capital and thriving businesses and enterprises in cities such as Edinburgh and Glasgow. The whole country benefits from their success. However, pressures exist as a consequence. The sustainability of communities in the Highlands and Islands is something that we occasionally consider specifically, as we did recently when discussing community buy-outs, but it also needs to be examined in the round. Such discussions often come back to the same challenges that face many villages and towns across rural and remote parts of Scotland, such as how to retain and attract people to live and work locally.

Connectivity is a key to opening up rural Scotland as a place to live and do business. People who choose to stay or to move to rural Scotland need a home and the ability to participate in economic and social life. Therefore, technology might drive change in rural Scotland. Increasingly, we see distance working in businesses from one end of the country to the other, as well as businesses on one side of the globe supplying those on the other. That is why it is important that we get the roll-out of broadband right. Last year, the Scottish Affairs Committee's report on Scotland's demographics said:

"Broadband was identified by the Scottish Government as a key factor in determining the attractiveness of rural Scotland as a place to live. They said that a key to keeping young people in rural areas would 'of course, be our broadband connections'".

I welcome that commitment, but we need to see real results.

**Kate Forbes:** The vast majority of migrants to Scotland's population are coming from outside the UK, and they are driving growth in the Scottish population, which is exacerbated in the Highlands. Having made all those points, which I agree with, does the member not think that it is difficult to square the circle of being in a party that wants to cut immigration while, in the Highlands, we

desperately need immigration from outside the UK?

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** I am about to talk about the reasons for retaining people locally.

Nowhere are those results more important than in Scotland's island communities. Yesterday, I met representatives from Orkney Islands Council, and I met representatives from Shetland Islands Council during the summer. Those councils recognise the importance of ensuring that life on the islands remains sustainable, which means providing either local public services or, at worst, good access to local services. It is true that not every service can be provided in every local community, but that is why transport connections to and from mainland Scotland are important—and transport connections within our island communities are almost more important.

**Mairi Gougeon:** Will the member take an intervention?

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

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** I want to move on.

The Scottish Government's decision to treat Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council differently from how it treats other councils, by requiring them to contribute to the cost of internal ferries when similar councils do not, threatens local services within those council areas and access to those services for those who live on the islands. If a family who live on one of those islands cannot access a school for their children or a hospital when one of them is ill, or if they cannot care for their elderly when that is needed, that family will leave and others will join them in leaving, meaning that communities will shrink and become unsustainable.

Migration from around the world, from our neighbouring countries in Europe and from within the United Kingdom will be important for the future of many communities in Scotland. However, simply asserting how welcoming we are is not sufficient; we need a Scottish Government that is willing to take on the challenges that have been outlined today. We need real action on the issues that many of our rural communities face, and we need to stand against actions that will make Scotland unattractive or make living in Scotland's remote communities almost impossible.

16:33

**Ivan McKee (Glasgow Provan) (SNP):** Scotland's population has been in relative decline for the past 300 years, and that trend has been partially reversed only in the past decade. In 1700, 20 per cent of the population of Great Britain resided in Scotland. By 1900, that proportion had

reduced to 13 per cent. In my lifetime, it has reduced from 10 per cent to barely 8 per cent today.

Net emigration from Scotland has been the key characteristic of our demographics for centuries. Fully 8 million current residents of the rest of the UK are said to be descendants of Scots, and the pattern of Scots settling in other countries across Europe, the Commonwealth and further afield is well documented.

In absolute terms, Scotland's population in 2000, at around 5 million, was almost the same as it was 100 years earlier, at the end of the Victorian era. That timeframe saw a doubling of the populations of other comparable countries such as Norway, Denmark and Sweden, among others.

A determination to reverse that long-term trend through the policies of the Scottish Parliament has done much to help us to turn the corner. A key part of that success story has been the influx of new Scots, the largest proportion of whom have come from the new EU member states since the 2004 accession.

That trend is essential to Scotland's economic success in future decades, but it is now at risk as a consequence of the UK Government's decision to pursue a hard Brexit. Leaving the single market and ending the free movement of labour across the EU will end at a stroke the main route for recent immigration that has been so beneficial to Scotland's economy and society.

A key consequence of net emigration from Scotland has been a demographic profile that is not helpful to our future economic growth and public sector finances. Scotland's ageing population needs young working people to pay taxes to fund pensions, and it needs the dynamism of young immigrants to drive forward our economy as they have done in past decades and centuries. Although emigration has been dramatic over the centuries, waves of immigrants into Scotland have gone some limited way towards mitigating its worst effects. As a consequence, Scotland is a healthy mix of descendants of people from all over the globe and a country that celebrates the strength that comes from that diversity. In that sense, many more of us are new Scots than may be obvious at first, and I count myself among that number. Of my eight great-grandparents, only two were born in Scotland.

The economic benefits of migration into Scotland are well documented. Each EU migrant working in Scotland adds an average of £34,000 to GDP, with consequent contributions to our tax base. The total GDP contribution of EU citizens living in Scotland adds up to more than £4 billion. Migrants contribute more to public sector finances than they take out, and, if someone encounters an

EU national in our Scottish NHS, that person is far more likely to be a medical professional who is treating them than a fellow patient.

The diversity of Scotland's population is not significant only for that direct economic impact, though. There are also the immeasurable benefits of the gain to Scotland's international standing, prestige, reach and profile, which are critical to building business and cultural links in an increasingly internationalised economy. Immigrants from other countries maintain links with those countries, which are invaluable in building Scottish business and export links.

The critical impact on key sectors including agriculture, finance, manufacturing, education and our health service is also well understood. At a time when pressures on our health service arising from our ageing population mean that we require more and not fewer doctors and nurses, the BMA reports that 45 per cent of EU doctors who work in the UK are considering leaving and that 19 per cent have already made plans to go. The figures for Scotland are marginally better, but they are still extremely concerning, with 34 per cent considering leaving and 14 per cent having already made plans to do so.

The numbers tell a powerful story, but the message or the mood music that is conveyed by the debate is also hugely important. What EU migrants who are living in the UK hear is that they are no longer welcome, and that message comes from the top—from UK Government politicians who set that tone. People hear that message in Warsaw as much as they hear it in Wishaw, and the number of EU citizens who plan to come to Scotland in key skill sectors is already significantly down. The damage is already being done.

The months of prevarication and the inability of the UK Government to offer clarity to EU citizens are not some clever negotiating wheeze but a dramatic own goal. Regardless of where the Brexit deal ends up, it will be difficult to rebuild bridges with EU nationals who are already here and those whom we would hope to persuade to come here.

The impact of the drop in the value of sterling since the Brexit vote should also not be underestimated. Why should people come here when a less risky, more secure, more welcoming and more profitable option exists in other western European countries?

The importance of the message that we send out from this Parliament and the steps that the Scottish Government can take to reassure EU nationals should not be underestimated. We say to EU citizens who are living and working in Scotland, "We value your contribution to our economy and our society." We say to EU countries and their current residents who are thinking of

emigrating, "Scotland is a welcoming country and your skills will be valued here." We say to the UK Government, "Wake up and realise the economic damage you are doing to Scotland and to the UK." If it is not going to reverse its damaging immigration policies, it should at least allow us, in Scotland, to implement our own policies to protect our economy.

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

16:39

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** When baked Alaskas and flat sponges are thrown around in the chamber as insults, we can tell that MSPs have been spending far too much time watching "The Great British Bake Off".

I am very pleased to be a closing speaker in the debate, and I welcome the opportunity in the chamber to discuss migration.

My mother emigrated from Glasgow to Hong Kong, where I was born, so it could be said that I am a migrant to Scotland. Scots are to be found in every corner of the world, and we welcome people to this country from across the world, but it is true that Brexit has implications for all of us. In some areas, we can only begin to estimate the impact on businesses, our economy and individuals. This is a time of huge uncertainty, but we can be clear about the impact that Brexit will have on the labour market in Scotland. Some 181,000 EU nationals live in Scotland. The majority of them are Polish; they are followed by the Irish and Spanish nationals. I will speak about specific sectors in a moment.

I agree with the minister's and Jackson Carlaw's comments about the population. We know that Scotland's population is likely to decline if we do nothing. Unfortunately, we are also ageing. We are a more rapidly ageing population than the population elsewhere in the UK, so we depend on inward migration to meet our population growth target. If that migration is absent and EU nationals are not able to come here, our population will inevitably decline, with all the impact that that will have. That would not be good for our economy. It would lead to shortages in key industry sectors and public services.

Let me touch on some of the most affected sectors, which members across the chamber have covered. The soft fruit industry relies on seasonal labour and the majority of its employees come from the EU. That industry has grown substantially in the past 20 years and it contributes over £1 billion to the UK economy. We cannot afford to lose it.

The hospitality sector would experience a double whammy in losing employees from the EU, who make up a significant element of the workforce, and visitors from the EU. That would have a material effect on the industry and our GDP.

Other members have covered the health and education sectors. If we consider universities alone, we see that EU nationals comprise 9 per cent of students and almost 25 per cent of research staff. We risk losing talented European staff and academics. Nobody can tell me that that would not be bad for the education sector and our economy. A University and College Union survey of more than 1,000 lecturers and professors suggested that up to three quarters of continental EU academics in the country have said that they are now more likely to leave the UK.

**Mike Rumbles:** Has Jackie Baillie not made the case that the problem is UK-wide and that we should have solidarity on it with the rest of the UK?

**Jackie Baillie:** Mike Rumbles knows that I always have solidarity with the rest of the United Kingdom, but he should look at the evidence, which tells us that there is a greater percentage of academics from the European Union in Scotland than there is in the rest of the UK. That makes the argument for a differential system in Scotland. I hope that Mike Rumbles reads that evidence.

We know that our NHS relies on staff from the EU. We heard from the minister, Rhoda Grant and others about the impact on nurses, that there has been a 96 per cent drop in nurses who want to come to Scotland, that vacancy rates are up, and that one in five doctors is thinking about leaving. Willie Rennie was right to point out the hypocrisy of the Conservatives on GP vacancies. Brexit and the lack of response on migration are contributing to driving doctors out of the country.

It is not just about people not coming here; EU nationals who already live and work here are leaving. As Mairi Gougeon rightly highlighted, they are doing so because they do not feel welcome here, they have no certainty about the future, and they do not know whether they will be able to access public services for their families.

Let me turn to what we can do. We should have a differentiated immigration system that can be linked to specific sectors. We have had a differentiated system before with the fresh talent scheme, and we can do so again. My colleague Lewis Macdonald suggested a range of initiatives that we could undertake, which I commend to the minister. The Scottish Government could codify the rights of migrants and ensure access to services. We could do more to promote Scotland to migrants using the trade network that is being developed overseas. The appointment of Scottish

members to the Migration Advisory Committee would be helpful, as would developing a fresh talent 2 initiative and more besides.

We need to agree those initiatives—whatever they may be—with slightly more urgency. We also need to apply that approach to UK nationals living in the rest of the EU. People need certainty. The UK and the Scottish Governments need to set aside their differences in the interests of the economy, our public services and individuals. We should be an opening and welcoming nation, but Brexit is challenging that perception.

I urge those members opposite who have an influence on the UK Government to use that influence in Scotland's interest and to create a differentiated migration system that works for all of Scotland.

16:45

**Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):**

First, I declare a personal interest in the area of migration: I have lived and worked in five different countries across the world and had the privilege of seeing at first hand the cultural, social and economic benefits that migration offers.

The significant benefits of migration here in Scotland have been highlighted by members across the chamber. A very important message for this Parliament to send out is that we welcome migrants to Scotland, we value their significant contribution and we welcome the diversity that they bring to our society.

The minister opened the debate by reminding us that Scotland's population would be in decline in the absence of migration. Jackson Carlaw highlighted that migration plays a critical role in addressing the ageing demographics in Scotland and offered up the image of an up-ended pyramid to describe what our population profile might resemble without migration.

Migrants coming to Scotland play a vital role in addressing the skills gap, as Lewis Macdonald explained, by providing seasonal workers for different sectors, including hospitality and rural industries, as we heard from Rachael Hamilton, and helping to meet labour shortages in particular geographical areas such as the Highlands and Islands, as Rhoda Grant mentioned.

Jamie Halcro Johnston made an important observation when he said that, in the context of Brexit and a rapidly changing economy, we need to understand where migrants arriving in Scotland are coming from and how that might change. Based on the latest available numbers, 42 per cent of migrants come to Scotland from the rest of the UK and 25 per cent come from the EU. Since 2010, recent trends have seen a drop in levels of

EU migration to Scotland. The figures also show that 12 per cent of migrants are from Commonwealth countries and 22 per cent come from the rest of the world.

The numbers are important because they show the diversity in the origin of migrants. That diversity is to be welcomed, particularly when Europe is experiencing significant demographic challenges—over the next 25 years, Europe is projected to be the only continent whose population will decline. The migration numbers also show and emphasise how important the UK single market is for Scotland. That market accounts for 63 per cent of Scotland's trade; the rest of the UK is also the origin for almost half of Scotland's inward migration.

The consensus across the chamber is that migration will continue to play a critical role in Scotland's future.

**Willie Rennie:** If there is consensus across the chamber, is there consensus in the member's party? His Prime Minister says that the value of immigration is "close to zero"? Does he agree with us or her?

**Dean Lockhart:** That is, as Mr Rennie knows, a selective quote. We are having a debate in the Scottish Parliament about the value of migration in Scotland and the system that we need. The Scottish Conservatives are calling for an immigration system that is fair, balances the interests of the economy and those of migrants, is not unduly uncomplicated and is tailored to meet industry and sectoral needs in Scotland and the UK. Therefore, we cannot agree with the Scottish Government's call for a separate immigration system for Scotland.

We have listened to the views that have been expressed by leading organisations across Scotland that a differentiated system is unnecessary and unworkable, and would damage the economy.

**Clare Adamson:** The member will be aware that we have a differentiated immigration system: the post-study work visa. That system was adopted across the UK, but now remains in place only for certain English universities. Given that we already have that differentiated situation, is it not right that Scotland should be making its own decisions?

**Dean Lockhart:** The post-study work visa is a particular issue. We agree that we should explore options and possibly look at how we could reintroduce it at some stage.

Let me return to the commentary, from leading organisations in Scotland, on a differentiated immigration system. The Food and Drink Federation Scotland raised concerns about the

increased cost and complexity of such a system and the potential problems for migrants who relocate elsewhere in the UK. The views of such organisations reflect the reality that, on the whole, Scotland's immigration needs are similar to those of the rest of the UK. That is reflected in the UK-wide tier 2 shortage occupation list, which lists 34 occupational categories for which there is a UK-wide shortage. The separate and additional Scotland-only list, which shows occupations with a particular shortage in Scotland, lists only two occupations. In other words, Scotland has the same labour shortages as the rest of the UK in 34 out of 36 occupational categories, which is not exactly a compelling case for differentiation.

Instead of calling for unnecessary additional powers, our amendment calls for the Scottish Government to make full use of existing powers to grow the economy, to make Scotland a more economically attractive destination, and to reduce the number of economically inactive people in Scotland, which currently stands at 730,000. Retraining a fraction of those people and bringing them into the workplace would go a long way towards meeting any potential labour shortages.

We also call on the Scottish Government to abandon plans further to increase income tax in Scotland. Disposable incomes in Scotland are already lower than those in the rest of the UK. One in five people in Scotland pays more tax than those in the rest of the UK. I will answer the question that the minister asked earlier. Yes—tax increases will discourage the inward migration of skilled workers if they can be paid more elsewhere in the UK. It will also encourage existing skilled workers in Scotland to look elsewhere, as they are punished financially by the Scottish National Party.

I support the amendment in Jackson Carlaw's name, and urge the Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to achieve a migration policy that will meet the sectoral needs of industry across Scotland and the UK.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Alasdair Allan to close the debate for the Scottish Government. Minister, you have until 4.59, please.

16:51

**Dr Allan:** I welcome the debate that we have just had. I am sure that in their constituencies, every member in the chamber will have EU citizens as well as businesses that are concerned about the potential impact of Brexit on their workforce. Many members will also have raised cases about the migration status of individual constituents who have made a commitment to live, raise their families and make a future here.

I believe—as do members across the chamber, I think—that inward migration has made an

overwhelmingly positive contribution to Scotland's economy and society. There was widespread agreement on that much. However, I am afraid that, once members on the Conservative benches started to speak beyond those generalities, I genuinely had to throw away my optimistic closing speech that was full of glowing commendations for them on their rational approach.

The evidence that has been published demands to be read. It shows that EU migration to Scotland is essential for ensuring sustainable population growth. I feel the need to re-emphasise the point that 100 per cent of our population growth over the next 10 years in Scotland will come from migration. If net migration to the UK falls, Scotland's population growth will be disproportionately affected. That is a challenge that is distinctive to Scotland. The UK position is very different. As I and others have said, only 54 per cent of the UK's population increase is expected to come from overseas migration. Therefore our needs are different from those of the UK as a whole. The debate that we are having in Scotland is distinctive. Our focus is on sustaining and growing our communities—especially our rural communities. We need population growth to meet that aim, and we need migration to sustain it. As Ross Greer and many others pointed out, that means that, on that issue, we can and must take a different approach from the approaches that are taken in different parts of the UK.

EU migration supports our economy in different ways. It ensures the availability of workers both now—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excuse me, minister. Mr Kelly, you are putting on a wee performance there. Do you think that you could do it more discreetly? Thank you. [*Laughter.*]

**Dr Allan:** I want to mention one or two specific contributions to the debate. Kate Forbes spoke eloquently about the situation in the Highlands and Islands, about the human impact of Brexit on families who are unable to make plans for themselves—and sometimes unable to live together—and about how migration fits into the wider economic strategy that we need to deal with rural depopulation.

Mr Carlaw pointed out that hospitality is not mentioned in the Government's motion. The UK hospitality sector is more heavily hit than other sectors; I accept the point that he made in that regard. The Scottish Government has expressed its concerns to the Migration Advisory Committee. It is regrettable that that committee's UK-level report will be produced after the UK immigration bill is likely to be introduced, so it is difficult to see how the Migration Advisory Committee will have a direct impact on policy. Nonetheless, we seek to

engage with it, specifically on the issues to do with the hospitality sector that Mr Carlaw raised.

Joan McAlpine talked about the impact on families, and Graeme Dey and Willie Rennie expanded on that, talking about what European citizens actually feel and say about all this—something that is often overlooked in the debate. Mr Dey has been taking soundings in the agriculture sector, and I have sought to do likewise across Scotland.

At one point in the debate, the rights of UK citizens elsewhere in the EU were raised almost as if that issue was an argument against the debate's focus on EU citizens. We absolutely agree that we need to protect the rights of UK citizens who live elsewhere in the EU, but let me say, very gently, that bracing ourselves for the impact of a no-deal Brexit is perhaps not the way to do that.

Mr Rumbles and a number of other members, including Mr Lewis Macdonald, asked what is different about the situation in Scotland. I can give a one-word answer: demographics. We have 4.5 per cent unemployment in Scotland, and we all work hard to provide the skills and jobs that are needed, but with such a small pool we simply cannot meet the skills shortage, and we certainly cannot do so if we do not have an open and welcoming attitude towards migrants.

**Mike Rumbles:** The point that I made in an intervention was that this is a UK-wide problem, which needs to be solved on a UK-wide basis. The problem is hitting Scotland, but problems are also hitting England and Wales.

**Dr Allan:** I would never deny that these are problems for England and Wales, too, but I am pleased that almost all parties in the debate have recognised that Scotland needs to do something different if we are to solve our distinctive bit of the problem. For instance, the all-party parliamentary group on social integration at Westminster believes that immigration should be devolved. I take it that the member's party is represented on the group.

The University of Oxford's migration observatory was prayed in aid by a number of Conservatives in today's debate. I point out that the migration observatory says that the arguments against sub-national visas are political, rather than economic.

I want to conclude on the point about distinctiveness. The reason why we cannot support the Tory amendment is, I am afraid, that its language calls to mind the very unfortunate remarks of Ruth Davidson—I believe that she made them on 17 May—when she described Scotland as “uniquely unattractive” to people from other countries. That was about as unhelpful a

remark as it is possible to imagine, if we are trying to attract people to live here.

I heard the arguments that were made in favour of the amendment, but I think that rational people will conclude from what members said about our demographics that the situation is different in Scotland. Rachael Hamilton said that Scotland faces “democratic challenges”. I accept that that was a Freudian slip, and she went on to say that we face a demographic challenge. We certainly do, and if we are to address that demographic challenge we have to be open to people coming to live here from other countries.

I hope that that was the tenor of today’s debate. It is why the debate was held today, and it is why I commend the motion to the Parliament and hope that its sentiments receive widespread support.

## Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

16:59

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is the election of a member for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. I have received one valid nomination for appointment. The nomination is Sandra White.

The question is, that Sandra White be selected for appointment to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. Members should press yes, no or abstain.

### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)



Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 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)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the vote on the appointment of Sandra White to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is: For 106, Against 0, Abstentions 0.

As a majority of members have voted in favour, Sandra White is duly selected for appointment to the SPCB. I congratulate her on her appointment. *[Applause.]*

## Decision Time

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S5M-08828.1, in the name of Jackson Carlaw, which seeks to amend motion S5M-08828, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on migration, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

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)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (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)

### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (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)  
 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)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (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)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 29, Against 78, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-08828, in the name of Alasdair Allan, on migration, 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)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (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)  
 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)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (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)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 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 74, Against 33, Abstentions 0.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament supports the evidence in the Scottish Government's submission to the Migration Advisory Committee, which demonstrates the positive contribution of European citizens to Scotland's communities and economy; notes that immigration is crucial to key sectors, including public services, health, higher education, rural industries and financial services; recognises that free movement has allowed UK citizens to travel, live and work across the EU freely; further recognises that EU migration has helped reverse a decline in the Scottish population and that EU citizens' right to live, work, study and invest in Scotland must be protected; notes that the Scottish Government should continue to use its powers to make Scotland an attractive place to live and work; acknowledges the findings of reports from the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee and the UK's Scottish Affairs Committee and All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, which agreed that the current migration system needs to change and reflect local circumstances, and supports calls for a differentiated, more flexible solution, which is tailored to meet Scotland's circumstances.

## World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-07335, in the name of Emma Harper, on world chronic obstructive pulmonary disease day. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

#### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament recognises World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day on 15 November 2017; understands that COPD is a progressive and long-term lung condition without a cure, which affects a recorded 129,000 people in Scotland, but that many more people are undiagnosed; further understands that someone from the most deprived areas of Scotland is more than twice as likely to have COPD and that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women with COPD; believes that the most significant causal factor is smoking but, despite a decline in rates of smoking, COPD morbidity and mortality rates remain high; notes that people with COPD are affected by breathlessness, coughing, weight loss and fatigue but, with the right support from healthcare professionals, third sector organisations and communities, it is possible to live well and self-manage the condition; notes that up to two-thirds of people with COPD remain undiagnosed and, without optimal treatment, progressive lung disease reduces their quality of life; commends charities such as the British Lung Foundation and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland for the work they do to raise awareness of COPD and helping to ensure that people in the South Scotland parliamentary region and across Scotland get the treatment and support that they deserve, and welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to a Respiratory Health Quality Improvement Plan, as noted in its response to question S5W-00968.

17:04

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. One person in the United Kingdom dies every five minutes from lung disease. That is really important to me as a registered nurse, which I remind members is reflected in my entry in the register of members' interests.

November 15 is world COPD day. It is an opportunity for us to raise awareness of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and this year's theme is "The Many Faces of COPD". Tomorrow evening in Parliament it will be my great privilege, as co-convenor of the cross-party group on lung health, to host an evening reception for world COPD day. We will have the opportunity to meet people who are living with COPD, their partners and friends, healthcare professionals, researchers and third sector organisations who all work tirelessly to raise awareness and offer services to support people who are living with the disease. I hope that many of the members who are here today can join us tomorrow evening, because

every member will have constituents who are living with the condition.

“Breathing is something we all do, day in, day out, every day of our lives. It is so innate that most of us rarely stop to think about it. We think less of breathing than of the life it sustains.”

Those words were written by Sir Michael Marmot in the foreword to “The Battle for Breath”, which is a document about the impact of lung disease in the UK.

COPD is a progressive and long-term condition for which there is no cure, and which affects a recorded 129,000 people in Scotland, although many more are undiagnosed. COPD describes a number of lung conditions including emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Sometimes people have more than one condition.

With COPD, the airways become inflamed, and the alveoli—the tiny wee air sacs in the lungs—become damaged. That causes the airways to become narrower, which makes it harder to breathe in and out. Those breathing difficulties can affect many aspects of daily life.

Last year, the British Lung Foundation published “The Battle for Breath” report, which is the most comprehensive study of the extent and impact of lung disease in the UK since a 2006 report by the British Thoracic Society. The report found that Scotland has one of the highest rates of new diagnoses of COPD, and that people living in Glasgow are more at risk of emergency hospital admissions for COPD than are people anywhere else in the UK. The inequality around the disease is stark. People from the most deprived areas of Scotland are more than twice as likely to have COPD, and we are witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of women with COPD.

The most significant causal factor is smoking. Despite the decline in smoking rates, COPD mortality and morbidity rates remain high. We know that there were nearly 10,000 deaths from COPD in Scotland in 2011, and the number is expected to rise to nearly 14,000 by 2030. That will inevitably increase its healthcare costs in Scotland. A recent study estimates that by 2030 the annual direct healthcare costs in Scotland for COPD will have risen to £207 million.

What is it like to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease? People with COPD are affected by breathlessness, coughing, weight loss, fatigue and often depression, social isolation and stigmatisation as their condition deteriorates. Diagnoses often come late, when the disease is already advanced. There are many reasons for that. The early-warning symptom of breathlessness is often ignored, with it being seen as a simple sign of getting older, rather than as a trigger to seek help.

That is why the British Lung Foundation embarked on a campaign to raise awareness of breathlessness as a symptom of lung disease. The “Listen to your lungs” campaign encouraged people to take an online breath test. Advice was offered on the basis of the results, which allowed people to take better control of their health. About 30 per cent of people who took the test went on to see their general practitioners, and 8 per cent were diagnosed with COPD.

In summary, it can be deeply unpleasant to have COPD. In too many cases the treatment for people who are living with severe COPD is directed largely at symptom control and optimising quality of life. Evidence suggests that existing healthcare provision for COPD patients is reactive and focuses on acute exacerbations.

Despite having poor prognoses and high levels of morbidity and mortality that are comparable to other serious conditions such as lung cancer, people with COPD do not get the same access to specialist support and services.

Last week, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Shona Robison, attended the national COPD event in Stirling, at which many excellent presentations were made on service innovations that have reduced hospital admissions. I have heard about many evidence-based interventions that are overlooked; a good example is pulmonary rehabilitation, about which other members will speak in a wee minute.

The majority of people who attend pulmonary rehab demonstrate improvement in exercise capacity and health status, but a recent report by Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and the Scottish pulmonary rehabilitation action group cites low uptake, long waiting times and poor signposting. I visited and participated in the huffin’ puffin’ pulmonary rehab group at NHS Dumfries and Galloway’s gym. I did tai chi for the first time, which was part of the rehab. It helps to focus on control and slow breathing methods as part of the rehab process. NHS Dumfries and Galloway has a great respiratory team; I am proud that my sister Phyllis Murphie, who is a respiratory nurse consultant, is sitting in the gallery. She has been a great driver for promoting and optimising great lung health care locally, nationally and internationally.

We need a plan not just to reduce the burden of the cost to the NHS in Scotland, but to protect people and to prevent people from developing COPD. We need a plan for early detection and access to services in order to help people to take control of their disease progression and to slow it down. We need a plan for consistent value-added service offerings across Scotland, with improved outcomes and a plan and commitment to the right to a dignified death.

I was pleased to attend the University of the West of Scotland's Dumfries campus in the summer to launch the Border and regions airways training hub research project—known as BREATH—which will look at COPD across south-west Scotland. The Scottish Government has committed to a plan to improve lung health in Scotland, and I look forward to hearing from the minister soon of what support the Scottish Government can provide for a respiratory task force to build on the existing work of the Scottish advisory group and to charge it with the development of a lung health improvement plan.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate. We are a bit pushed for time. Speeches should be of up to four minutes, please.

17:12

**Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** I welcome the debate and I thank Emma Harper for sharing the opportunity for Parliament to recognise world chronic obstructive pulmonary disease day. It is vital that we raise awareness of the disease across the south of Scotland and, indeed, the whole of Scotland.

COPD is a growing illness; its seriousness cannot be overstated. The World Health Organization predicts that COPD will become the third most common cause of death worldwide by 2030. As Emma Harper said, more than 129,000 people are diagnosed as having COPD in Scotland. An estimated 200,000 people have the condition but are not diagnosed, and so are missing out on appropriate treatment and management. Unlike heart disease and stroke, lung disease is not a national clinical priority. Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland reports that, unlike improvements that have been made to the impacts of those conditions, poor lung health prevalence and mortality rates are not declining.

In the Scottish Borders, there are a recorded 2,742 people with COPD, but there are also people who are living with the disease unknowingly. The difference between the Borders and other regions in Scotland is, unfortunately, that NHS Borders is the only regional health board in Scotland that does not currently provide a pulmonary rehabilitation programme. Pulmonary rehabilitation is clinically proven to be a highly cost-effective means of treatment. On 6 November, I wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Shona Robison, and to NHS Borders to call for their support to reinstate rehabilitation for COPD sufferers in the Borders so that they can live well and self-manage their condition.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland has affiliated support groups in Eyemouth, Gala and Kelso that

meet weekly and provide exercise sessions. I recently visited the Eyemouth and district rehab support group that was set up by a local man called Jock Shiells with the support of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. Jock has COPD and he identified a gap in local provision of exercise opportunities for people who are living with long-term health conditions.

That group is crucial in an area where there is no pulmonary rehabilitation. It offers vital support to people who suffer from the disease. On my visit, it was fantastic to hear about and to see its work, and to understand the difficulties and challenges that people living with COPD face. People living with COPD experience symptoms including breathlessness and fatigue, which make keeping active a daunting thought, although it is precisely that which is required to manage COPD symptoms. The Eyemouth rehab support group manages to combine the health and social needs that are vital to rehabilitation. Thanks to the energy of its members and the support of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and Live Borders, the group is thriving and making a real difference to people's lives. I have suggested that members of the group visit Parliament so that we can all learn from their good work.

There is clear room for improvement to help people who are suffering from COPD in the Scottish Borders. The first thing that is required is provision of pulmonary rehabilitation and the second is prioritisation of lung disease, so I call on Borders NHS Board to consider investing in pulmonary disease rehabilitation to give my constituents back their quality of life.

I want to close by acknowledging world chronic obstructive pulmonary disease day on 15 November, and by acknowledging the fantastic work of Eyemouth rehab support group, which is a much-needed and much-valued service to help people who suffer from COPD with the health and social support that they require.

17:16

**Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP):** I thank Emma Harper for bringing this important debate to Parliament today, and for recognising world COPD day, which will take place tomorrow. There are 115,000 COPD diagnoses in the UK each year—a new diagnosis every five minutes, with the highest proportion of those diagnoses being in the north of the UK, including Scotland. On top of difficulties including breathing, coughing, weight loss and fatigue, COPD can compound effects that are caused by mental and emotional struggles. For a person who is dealing with isolation or depression it can be much more difficult to get out of the house or to socialise and stay active if their breathing is impaired.

Thankfully, there are some good resources available that outline what individuals can do proactively to manage their COPD, as well as information about steps that the Government can take to help the number of diagnoses to decline. For example, pulmonary rehabilitation can be accessed through referral by a GP, practice nurse or respiratory team, and that rehabilitation can take place in a group of about eight to 16 people over six to eight weeks in a local hospital, community hall, leisure centre or health centre, for example.

Trained healthcare professionals help attendees to improve muscle strength, breathe more efficiently, cope better with feeling out of breath, improve fitness and take steps to feel better mentally. There are also “Breathe easy” support groups at which people who are experiencing COPD can talk with one another, which helps to prevent the feeling that they are going it alone and are isolated. Anyone looking for a group can go to the British Lung Foundation’s website and search by postcode.

It is important that people take advantage of the amount of information that is provided online by organisations such as the British Lung Foundation and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, because early diagnosis is critical for people with COPD. Intervention at the outset can improve their quality of life and reduce the need for health and social care services.

There are also steps that members of the Scottish Parliament can take to support and advance actions that will stem the causes of COPD in the first place. COPD is caused by long-term lung damage from breathing in harmful substances. Obviously, a great deal of that damage is the result of smoking cigarettes, but air pollution of various types can also play a role. Since the early 2000s, Scotland has done much to combat tobacco use, including a ban on tobacco advertising and a ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces. Some of the newest laws that have been brought forth by the Government have banned under-18s from accessing tobacco and vapour products as well, but as Emma Harper rightly notes in her motion, despite a decline in the rate of smoking, COPD morbidity and mortality remain high. Therefore, when the British Lung Foundation calls on the Government to deliver plans to clean up the air we breathe and to tackle emissions from diesel vehicles, we must do more. If breathing harmful substances increases the levels of COPD in Scotland, we must do everything that we can to eliminate those poisonous substances.

Steps that the Government is taking to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel vehicles, to create low emission zones in Scotland’s four

largest cities and to ban fracking will protect our climate and ensure that the air that people breathe in Scotland does not compromise their lung health. That can only be a good thing.

In addition to recognising the effects of COPD and considering what can be done to support people with the disease, let us remember that protection of our climate is intertwined with safeguarding the health of the people who live here. Each of us can and should take steps that keep Scotland at the forefront of curbing tobacco use, and at the forefront of environmental stewardship.

17:20

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** I echo other members’ thanks to Emma Harper for lodging her motion and providing members with the opportunity to raise awareness of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ahead of COPD day tomorrow. I also thank Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, the British Lung Foundation and Friends of the Earth for providing information for the debate and, more importantly, the hugely important work that they carry out.

As we have heard, Scotland has some of the highest rates of lung disease in the world. More than 129,000 people in Scotland are diagnosed with COPD and estimates suggest that a further 200,000 people are undiagnosed. In my home region of Dumfries and Galloway, 4,599 people are recorded as having COPD. However, those figures show only part of the picture.

Prevalence varies widely depending on a range of factors. There is a particularly strong correlation between age and risk. Although 1 per cent of adults aged 35 to 44 have been diagnosed with COPD, the figure rises to 9 per cent among those aged 65 to 74 and 11 per cent among those aged 75 and over. As is all too often the case, the burden of the condition falls disproportionately on the worst off, as Emma Harper rightly highlighted. There is also a complex relationship between gender and COPD: for the first time, prevalence is higher among women than it is among men.

As well as demographic factors, there are a number of other key risk factors. The most significant, as has been mentioned, is smoking, but there is evidence that other environmental and genetic factors also contribute. Certain occupational hazards such as dust, chemicals and fumes have been found to increase the risk of developing COPD, and air pollution has been cited as another possible cause.

We still have much to learn about the causes of COPD, let alone find a cure. COPD cannot be cured, but, as with many lung conditions, proper treatment can help the symptoms and significantly

improve quality of life. Nonetheless, recent figures showed that around 27 per cent of people who have been diagnosed with COPD receive no treatment for their condition. We need to do more to improve the availability and standard of treatment for incurable obstructive lung conditions such as COPD and for restrictive lung conditions, including one that I will briefly highlight: idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

Although IPF is relatively rare, Scotland has one of the highest rates in the UK, with around 3,300 people currently living with the condition—a condition with which my father was diagnosed in 2012. Initially, doctors believed that his symptoms were COPD, but, after he had been in and out of hospital over a lengthy period, tests eventually revealed scarring or fibrosis of the lungs.

I remember visiting him in hospital when he told me that doctors had diagnosed IPF. I knew very little about it, but my first reaction was to think that at least the doctors knew what it was and that they could now get on with making him better. I did what we all do in such circumstances: I went home and Google searched the condition. I can still remember feeling sick to the pit of my stomach when I read what it meant. Survivability is worse than for most cancers, with a mean survival rate of between two and five years. The cause of the condition is largely unknown, and the number of cases in Scotland is on the increase. Sadly, just a few months after his diagnosis, my father passed away from chronic heart failure exacerbated by his pulmonary fibrosis.

IPF, like COPD, is an incurable condition. Treatment is aimed at managing the symptoms and, in the case of COPD in particular, it can make a significant difference to the quality of life for people who live with chronic lung conditions. A number of members have rightly highlighted pulmonary rehabilitation as one such treatment. It not only equips people with exercises to improve their fitness and help to control the physical symptoms of their condition, but acts as a source of support and information from health professionals and peers with similar conditions. However, research by Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland that was highlighted recently to the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee revealed serious shortcomings in existing provision. Throughout Scotland, the format, capacity and delivery of pulmonary rehabilitation vary widely. As Rachael Hamilton pointed out, NHS Borders has no service at all. Estimates suggest that only 8.4 per cent of people who would benefit from pulmonary rehabilitation are referred to services. Waiting times also vary drastically throughout Scotland.

My father's condition was probably too advanced to benefit in a meaningful way from any

treatment, as he was diagnosed relatively late. However, I appeal to the minister on behalf of the many thousands of our constituents with lung conditions who would benefit from treatment such as pulmonary rehabilitation to consider how the Government, along with the integration joint boards, can break down the barriers to accessing pulmonary rehabilitation to ensure that everyone who could benefit receives the treatment and support that they need.

17:25

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** I, too, thank Emma Harper for securing the debate. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease deserves the increased awareness that is offered by a platform such as this.

Thought to affect 200,000 to 300,000 people across Scotland—with the number of annual diagnoses rising steadily since 2004—COPD hinders something so innate and simple that many of us take it for granted: breathing. Studies show that 10,000 people in Scotland are diagnosed each year, equating to more than one new diagnosis every hour.

COPD causes airways to become inflamed and the air sacs in lungs to be damaged and, as such, it presents sufferers with a significant health risk. It also impacts on many aspects of daily life due to the narrowing of airways making it increasingly difficult to breathe in and out unhindered.

Although there are currently 129,000 recorded cases in Scotland, it is thought that up to two thirds of people with the condition remain undiagnosed but nevertheless experience a reduced quality of life. Symptoms include increasing breathlessness, frequent chest infections and a persistent chesty cough, which is too often dismissed as just a smokers' cough. Due to a lack of awareness, there is concern that those affected may not be receiving the correct treatment as quickly as they ought to, if at all.

Socioeconomic factors contribute to the prevalence of the condition. For example, recent figures show that the less well off someone is, the more likely they are to be diagnosed with COPD at some point in their lifetime. In addition, sufferers are usually aged 40-plus and the proportion of people with COPD increases markedly with advancing age. As Scotland currently has an ageing population, that surely further necessitates growing recognition of the disease. Although this long-term condition is incurable and non-reversible, in many cases treatment such as pulmonary rehabilitation or the use of inhalers can help to keep it under control and reduce the limitations on daily activities. It is therefore all the more important that we highlight the condition.

With access to sufficient support channels, it is entirely possible for someone with COPD to live well and self-manage it.

With that in mind, we should today pay tribute to charities such as the British Lung Foundation and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, whose efforts offer invaluable support to those diagnosed with COPD. The former has established local groups such as the breathe easy North Ayrshire support group, which serves my constituency of Cunninghame North. That is just one of many similar groups providing those living with COPD with the opportunity to make new friends while learning more about life with a lung condition.

I am sure that everyone will agree that today's debate represents an important step towards shining more light on COPD and ensuring high quality care for all those who suffer from it now and those who will suffer from it in future generations. It is important that we observe world COPD day tomorrow, 15 November, in the hope that it promotes public discourse and encourages Scotland's population to inform themselves about the symptoms and risks of COPD.

Overall, the burden that lung disease places on our nation's health and health services is immense: on a par with that of non-respiratory cancer and heart disease. Despite that fact, far fewer resources are invested in tackling lung disease than are invested in tackling those conditions. Further research into the causes of COPD and preventative measures must be supported if we are to reduce the burden that is caused by this lung disease, which has a mortality rate in the UK that is second only to lung cancer's. Indeed, my grandfather died of emphysema at the age of only 41.

Awareness alone is not enough to tackle the condition. Thankfully, the health and social care delivery plan that was published in December 2016 shows that the SNP Government is committed to working closely with the respiratory national advisory group on the development of a respiratory health quality improvement plan for Scotland. That will provide NHS boards in Scotland with a framework for the prevention, early detection and treatment of respiratory conditions, including COPD.

NHS Scotland recommends that someone with persistent symptoms should visit a GP, particularly if they are over the age of 35 and are a smoker or an ex-smoker. Numerous support channels are available to sufferers and, if symptoms are caused by COPD, it is best to begin treatment as soon as possible, in order to prevent significant lung damage. Ignoring symptoms is never the way forward. COPD is far too dangerous to go undiagnosed and untreated, especially considering the debilitating effects that it can have

on the physical and mental wellbeing of its sufferers.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call John Scott, to be followed by Mairi Gougeon.

17:29

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** I congratulate Emma Harper on securing this debate on COPD and COPD day tomorrow, and commend her convenership of the new cross-party group on lung disease, which is an important addition to the several valuable cross-party groups on health-related issues.

Lung diseases are one of the big outstanding health issues to be tackled nationally in Scotland. Regrettably, Scotland has one of the poorest records on lung disease in the UK and some of the highest mortality rates in not just the UK, but Europe. Of the lung diseases afflicting our country, COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis, is one of the worst. As others have said, more than 129,000 people in Scotland have been diagnosed with COPD. It is estimated that another 200,000 people have the condition, but have not been diagnosed, and so are not being appropriately treated or managed for the disease. Regrettably, in Ayrshire and Arran NHS area, almost 11,000 people are known to be living with COPD—a crushingly depressing figure and one that needs to be not just highlighted, as the debate is doing, but addressed by Government policy, as well as by our health board in Ayrshire.

Current levels of COPD are a function of many factors. In Ayrshire, among those worst affected are our elderly population and people in our historical mining communities. Those living in high deprivation index areas, where housing is poor and, regrettably, healthcare is no longer improving, are most affected and most at risk. Historically, Ayr divides itself into two parts—north and south of the River Ayr. Very regrettably, male constituents who live north of the River Ayr have a life expectancy seven years shorter than those living south of the River Ayr. COPD is one of the life-shortening diseases much to be found in north Ayr.

Compounding the problem is NHS Ayrshire and Arran's reducing ability to deliver treatment and waiting time targets, not just in north Ayr but throughout Ayrshire. That is further adversely complicated by several of our GP practices no longer being able to recruit GPs to come and live in Ayrshire and work in GP practices across Ayrshire. The 101 practice in Troon is the most recent practice to be placed under NHS Ayrshire and Arran control and administration.

John Scott complaining about health service provision in Ayrshire is hardly news, but it is not



just me who is saying that COPD must be addressed. The World Health Organization predicts that, by 2030, COPD will be the third most common cause of death worldwide. Since my constituents are among the worst affected in Scotland, I want our Government and my health board to address the problem now and stop that prediction becoming a reality, in Ayrshire at least.

The solution is not rocket science. According to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, only 8.4 per cent of people who would benefit from pulmonary rehabilitation are referred for services in Scotland, which is little short of scandalous. Air quality issues also need to be tackled, while the self-inflicted wound of smoking is one of the areas where, regrettably, people make the wrong lifestyle choices—choices that adversely affect their long-term health. Furthermore, passive smoking causes problems for future generations. For many, though, COPD is now too well established to be anything other than managed, which is why I support Emma Harper's motion.

World COPD day highlights the disease and, while it might be said that proposed Government action is too little, too late, the growing recognition of the problem and the highlighting of it will perhaps encourage our ministers and our Government to do more. I look forward to the minister's response about, I hope, action to be provided and further measures to be taken.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** In a slight change to the order that I read out earlier, Mark Ruskell is next, to be followed by Joan McAlpine.

17:34

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I thank Emma Harper for lodging the motion for debate. I also thank organisations such as the British Lung Foundation and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, as well as the many community organisations that we heard about from Rachael Hamilton and Kenny Gibson that are doing incredible work in our communities to support sufferers and raise awareness of COPD.

With the World Health Organization predicting that COPD will be the third biggest cause of death globally by 2030, it is vital that we get this life-limiting disease on to the political agenda.

I certainly welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to a respiratory health quality improvement plan. From listening to the voices at the lung health CPG, it is clear to me that a focused plan is long overdue. There is only patchy access to specialists in Scotland and a long way to go in terms of consistent early diagnosis and treatment. Of course, COPD is an issue that touches on many policy areas, from the quality of our homes to transport emissions, physical

activity, poverty, health and social care integration and even place making. I therefore hope that the plan has the reach to drive action across ministerial portfolios.

I will take a couple of minutes to focus on the links between COPD and air pollution that Ash Denham has already touched on. Unlike our food, we have little choice over the air that we breathe. In Scotland, we have taken great steps to tackle the main cause of COPD—smoking—with a steady and consistent decline in smoking rates over the past 40 years. However, we have yet to see a corresponding decline in diagnosis, so we are experiencing a generational lag in disease presentation. It is clear that we will be supporting people to live with the disease for many years to come.

Although we need further research into how often air pollution is a direct cause of COPD, what we know for sure is the impact that it has on those living with and managing the disease today. Air pollution exacerbates the inflammation of the lungs that is experienced by people with COPD, causing further breathlessness and coughing for people already struggling with simple day-to-day physical tasks.

We have heard already that COPD rates are significantly higher in low-income urban communities, the same communities that often experience higher rates of air pollution. Walking and outdoor exercise should form a key part of any pulmonary rehabilitation programme, but that may be impossible for many patients living in Scotland's 39 air quality management areas. The British Lung Foundation recommends the "CleanSpace" app, an innovative programme that combines journey tracking with local pollution data, allowing users to choose cleaner routes for their rehabilitation walks. That will provide peace of mind to some users and support more outdoor activity, but we must be clear that COPD sufferers should not have to check an app on their phone to decide whether it is safe to leave the house.

The quality improvement plan must be complemented by the work already under way to tackle air pollution, including the introduction of low-emission zones to ensure that our streets are clean and safe for all, but especially for vulnerable people in our communities who are living with COPD. Ultimately, the Government's clean air for Scotland strategy needs to have a clear goal, stemming from the respiratory plan, to add years to life and life to years through better lung health across Scotland.

17:37

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** Like other members, I thank Emma Harper for bringing

such an important debate to the Scottish Parliament this evening ahead of COPD awareness day.

Despite the fact that an estimated 384 million people across the world suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, the disease is not well known or understood. People know about lung cancer and heart disease, but awareness of COPD is very low. Indeed, it is so low that a recent report referred to it as the “unknown” killer. That is despite the fact that a study published last September by *The Lancet*—“Global Burden of Disease Study 2015”—showed that in 2015, 3.2 million people died from COPD worldwide, an increase of 11 per cent since 1990.

COPD is now the number 3 cause of death worldwide and it is estimated that it was the fourth most common cause of years of life lost in Scotland in 2015. It can be very easy to dismiss the symptoms of COPD as the effects of ageing or more simply, as others have said, as a smoker’s cough. However, with early diagnosis and the right support, it is possible to live well and self-manage the condition. I led a debate a few years ago in the Parliament about the term “self-management”, which is not well understood. Self-management, in essence, is the name that is given to a set of person-centred approaches that aim to enable individuals who are living with long-term conditions to take control of and manage their own health. The underlying principle is the desire to put people in the driving seat of their care. With access to the right information, people who are suffering from COPD and other health conditions can be in charge of their own future on their own terms.

Emma Harper touched briefly on the excellent self-management tool my lungs, my life, which is run by Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. My lungs, my life is a comprehensive free-to-use website that has been set up to help people to understand more about COPD and asthma, and to help those who are living with those conditions to use self-management as equal partners with health professionals. It provides information, support and practical advice about the conditions, and has sections that explain what COPD is and about diagnosis, treatment and how to manage it effectively. Good information is the key to living well.

It is imperative that Governments around the world work towards eradicating COPD, and bold policy interventions such as banning smoking in public places, as in Scotland, have gone some way towards that. The Scottish Government is also looking to combat air pollution by creating low-emission zones, phasing out the sale of petrol and diesel cars in the long term and increasing funding for active travel. While we work towards that goal, it is important that those who are

diagnosed are able to live the best possible lives. Access to good information and self-management techniques will play a big part in that.

17:40

**Mairi Gougeon (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):** I am grateful to Emma Harper for securing today’s debate and giving us the chance to discuss the issue in the chamber.

It is often lamented that we have a poor record when it comes to lung disease and today we have heard the numerous reasons associated with that, such as social deprivation, heavy industry and smoking. COPD is now responsible for more deaths per year than coronary heart disease and accounts for approximately 8 per cent of all hospital admissions. We heard from Colin Smyth that more than 129,000 people in Scotland have been diagnosed with COPD and, as we have also heard, it is likely that there are many more people with the disease who have yet to be diagnosed. In Tayside alone, there are more than 10,000 people living with COPD.

There have been significant advances in the management of the condition, including in the use of pulmonary rehabilitation, which we have heard quite a lot about this evening. My speech focuses on that, too, because although I rattled off some statistics at the beginning of my speech to make it sound as though I am knowledgeable about the condition, I—like others, to follow on from Joan McAlpine’s point—was previously not all that aware of it. I have become more familiar with the condition only recently after meeting a pulmonary rehab group in Forfar and taking part in its session.

Pulmonary rehab is designed to be a fixed period of treatment that is recommended to last between six and 12 weeks and combines exercise, education and advice to support those who live with COPD. However, as has been mentioned—first by Rachael Hamilton, I think—pulmonary rehab is not available across the whole of Scotland at present. Not every health board offers it and, in those that do, only 13 per cent of the people who would benefit from pulmonary rehab receive it. That problem is down to a lack of referrals. In Tayside, for example, there are 10,000 people who are diagnosed with COPD and around half of that number would benefit from pulmonary rehab, yet there are fewer than 700 referrals.

There are other barriers to participation in pulmonary rehab, including basic things such as access to venues and the travel to get there, which is a key issue in rural constituencies such as mine. That is a significant problem, because a person with breathlessness can struggle with

taking public transport or walking any distance to the venue where the pulmonary rehab takes place.

As I mentioned, I recently visited a pulmonary rehab group in my constituency. Forfar airways is run by Ian Baxter, who was diagnosed with COPD in 2004. He found that his medication was not helping and he was advised by his practice nurse to attend a lung rehabilitation group, which transformed his life. He and his friends set up their own pulmonary rehab group—Forfar airways—and applied for a grant and insurance from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, which provided the support. Ian obtained an exercise qualification from Angus Council so that he could take over when the group's yoga teacher was not available, and the group has now grown to around 40 members. I met Ian and the others at the session and it was an experience.

Around 40 people from all over Angus were there that day. They did exercises including stretching, seated exercises and singing, which, of course, I took part in. What is great about those sessions is that they provide not just physical therapy but a social event. I had the chance to speak to other members who told me about the impact that the rehab had had on their lives and, as it had for Ian, it had really transformed them. They told me that they felt fitter, they were able to walk further and they had been able to expand the number of everyday tasks that they were capable of—basic tasks that they had been completely unable to do before. Everything I saw and heard that day backed up the clinically proven evidence of how effective pulmonary rehabilitation can be.

Pulmonary rehab is a cost-effective treatment and, more important, it has the ability to change people's lives. It has the chance to improve the lives of countless others who are suffering with the condition. Whether people are offered pulmonary rehab should not be down to chance. I thank Emma Harper for highlighting the condition, and I encourage all health boards to offer that vital service.

17:45

**The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell):** I, too, commend Emma Harper for bringing a debate on COPD, a condition that the WHO predicts will be the third most common cause of mortality worldwide by 2030, although it is relatively unknown. The debate is particularly timely because it allows us to begin to change that, with world COPD day being tomorrow. This is the 15th year that the global initiative for chronic obstructive lung disease has organised the day. It is an important way of raising awareness and of improving COPD diagnosis, treatment and care around the world. Again, we pay tribute to Emma Harper for her dedication and tenacity in doing what she can to raise awareness

of and highlight issues around COPD and lung health more generally, and for the professional expertise that she always brings to these debates.

In Scotland, we have set out our future direction for sustainable health and care services in our health and social care delivery plan. We aim to provide high-quality services with a focus on prevention, early intervention and supported self-management. The integration of health and social care is one of the four major themes of that plan; indeed, it is one of the most significant reforms of Scotland's NHS. It provides a greater focus on community-based and more joined-up care for conditions such as COPD. It is also reflected in the many stories and testimonies that we have heard in the debate from members about their own local areas.

The benefits of integrated services are becoming more evident. The First Minister visited the COPD hub in Edinburgh last year. That centre's integrated approach involves GPs, specialist nurses, psychological services, pulmonary rehabilitation services and stop smoking services. Patients are supported by a community respiratory team that helps patients to better understand their condition and self-manage exacerbations using the nebuliser, medication and anxiety management strategies. That approach has delivered positive results, and we can and will seek to learn more from it.

We want patients who have COPD to be able to self-manage effectively in order to live their lives independently in their own homes, which they tell us is what they want to do. The six essential actions for improving unscheduled care have a strong focus on maintaining patients at home or in a homely setting, and we have invested £9 million in that programme this year. In particular, we invested £200,000 to support local COPD initiatives to help shift the balance of care.

In December last year, we established the COPD national working group and last week the cabinet secretary attended the launch of its best practice document, which focuses on streamlining COPD management through the integrated multidisciplinary approach. It also promotes the amazing work that is under way across the country and provides useful case studies to drive further improvement.

At the local level, respiratory managed clinical networks across Scotland work to improve patients' respiratory health and quality of life, ensuring that they access high-quality services. To support the work of the networks and the integrated work in communities, the respiratory national advisory group is developing a respiratory health quality improvement plan for Scotland that will identify the priority areas that are specific to Scotland and recommend actions for the

prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of respiratory conditions. The group includes our key partners—the British Lung Foundation and CHSS—which are working with us to deliver higher standards of care and treatment. I put on the record my thanks to them for the positive impact that they have had and the crucial input that they are still providing.

In particular, the my lungs, my life website, which members have mentioned and which was developed with CHSS and Scottish Government funding, provides an excellent online resource for patients and carers. It contains easily accessible advice on self-management, including information on healthy eating, stopping smoking and managing exacerbations, and it was highly commended in the BMA patient information awards last year.

The plan will endorse and implement many of the recommendations that were set out in the British Lung Foundation's report "The Battle for Breath: The impact of lung disease in the UK", which members have mentioned, with a focus on prevention, pulmonary rehabilitation and data collection. However, I absolutely recognise the requirement to reach out across professional boundaries, which Mark Ruskell outlined in his remarks.

As "The Battle for Breath" and members have highlighted, prevention and early intervention are key to minimising the prevalence and incidence of respiratory conditions including COPD. That means not just seeking to find those solutions from the NHS but actively seeking prevention across the whole system and different disciplines. Looking at COPD in the preventative context, I note that it is well established that the vast majority of COPD cases are smoking related. As members have mentioned, the condition—and smoking—have a disproportionate impact on those living in areas of deprivation.

We can see that against the backdrop that, through efforts by the Scottish Government to reduce smoking, rates have fallen from 31 per cent in 2003 to 21 per cent in 2016. Only one in five adults now smokes compared with approximately one in two 50 years ago. Over time, we expect the reduction to have an impact on the prevalence of COPD but, again, we need to be mindful of the inequalities that exist and ensure that, despite those improvements, we do not leave people behind.

In addition to smoking, poor air quality can cause irritation of the respiratory system and exacerbate conditions such as COPD. The 2017-18 programme for government sets out our commitment to take forward the actions in our first specific air quality strategy, "Cleaner Air for Scotland: The Road to a Healthier Future". We have also committed to establishing low-emission

zones in our four biggest cities by 2020, and we are currently consulting on implementing the first of those next year. That will have a positive impact on the most vulnerable sufferers of respiratory illness, as well as on children and families throughout Scotland. Ash Denham and Mark Ruskell made that point. That work will also align with the developing plan that I mentioned.

Many speakers discussed pulmonary rehabilitation, which is one of the most important elements of COPD care. As we heard, pulmonary rehabilitation programmes are designed to optimise individuals' lung health. A typical programme includes physical exercise such as walking and cycling coupled with educational sessions about COPD, including dietary, psychological and emotional support. As Mairi Gougeon noted, singing is also important. I think that we will get that tomorrow evening at the parliamentary reception.

The benefits of PR in reducing exacerbations and improving quality of life are supported by an incredibly strong evidence base, and PR availability is a key recommendation of national clinical guidelines that we expect NHS boards to follow. Access to PR will form an important part of our quality improvement plan, and I thank the Scottish pulmonary rehabilitation action group and CHSS for their work to produce the PR survey, which highlights the need for an increased focus on that. I again reassure them and members that that will improve further.

I thank Colin Smyth for bringing his personal story on the issue to bear; I thank Rachael Hamilton for highlighting the situation in the Borders; and I thank Mairi Gougeon for highlighting issues in Angus. Those personal testimonies will be a focus for our improvement work.

Kenny Gibson mentioned research. In order to gather reliable and useful data, we have committed to joining the UK national asthma and COPD audit programme from February next year, and we will provide funding of £78,000 to do so. That will again drive local improvement in the quality of care and diagnosis management with an important focus on PR.

There are many challenges and we must continue to focus on prevention by encouraging healthier lifestyles, but there is an opportunity for us, through our improvement plan, to make the improvements that we all seek. I again pay tribute to Emma Harper and all those who contributed to the debate this evening. I reassure them that the thoughts and views that they have expressed will be taken forward in our plan. Thank you.

*Meeting closed at 17:54.*

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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