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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 12:30]

First Minister's Question Time

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon, colleagues. We begin with First Minister's question time. Before we turn to questions, I invite the First Minister to update Parliament on the situation with Covid-19.

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Thank you, Presiding Officer.

I will give a quick update on today's statistics. Yesterday, 1,121 new cases were reported, which was 5.2 per cent of all the tests that were carried out. That takes the overall number of cases to 194,269.

Currently, 1,317 people are in hospital with Covid, which is 66 fewer than yesterday, and 99 people are receiving intensive care, which is one fewer than yesterday. However, I am sorry to report that 64 more deaths were registered of patients who first tested positive in the previous 28 days, so the total number of people who have died, under that daily measurement, is now 6,828.

National Records of Scotland has just published its weekly update, which includes cases in which Covid is a suspected or contributory cause of death. Today's update shows that, by Sunday, the total number of registered deaths that have been attributed to Covid under that wider definition was 953. Of those deaths, 323 were registered last week, which is 54 fewer than were registered in the previous week. Again, my condolences go to everyone who has lost someone.

Every death from Covid is deeply regrettable, and for that reason it never feels quite right for me to talk about encouraging news in the context of the NRS report. However, there are aspects of today's report that really do bear some emphasis, because they give us, I think, the first hard evidence of the positive impact of vaccination.

The number of deaths overall has fallen for three consecutive weeks. The number of deaths that have occurred in hospitals has fallen in that three-week period by 11 per cent, and the number of deaths that have occurred in people's own homes or in other non-institutional settings has fallen by 29 per cent. However, the number of deaths in care homes, which were the early focus of the vaccination programme, has fallen by 62 per cent. In fact, with the exception of one week at the end of August, when only two Covid deaths overall

were registered, care homes last week accounted for a smaller proportion of overall Covid deaths than at any time since March last year. That is positive news, given the toll that the virus has taken on our care homes.

More generally, the age breakdown of the total number of deaths in the past three weeks shows that the largest reduction, of 45 per cent, was in the over-85 age group. Of course, over-80s who are living in the community were the next priority focus of the programme. It is reasonable to take some heart from that, because it strongly suggests that the vaccination programme is having the hoped-for effect of reducing the death toll from the virus.

On the vaccination programme more generally, I can report that, as of 8.30 this morning, 1,320,074 people had received the first dose, which is an increase of 32,070 since yesterday. As I indicated yesterday, we have offered first doses to all over-70s, all care home residents, all front-line health and care workers, and all people with a serious clinical vulnerability. In addition, 64 per cent of 65 to 69-year-olds have now received the first dose. Again, I thank everyone who has been involved in delivering the programme.

I highlight one final point. From tomorrow, the advice that is given to close contacts of people who test positive for Covid will change. As well as being asked to isolate for 10 days, they will now be asked, as a matter of course, to get tested as well. If they then test positive, their contacts will be traced and more chains of transmission will be broken. That is a further strengthening of test and protect.

As I confirmed yesterday, next week we will publish a revised strategic framework that will set out the data, principles and priorities that will guide our gradual exit from lockdown when the time is right. For now, if we want to maintain the good progress that we are seeing and avoid setbacks, we must stick with it. I therefore continue to urge people to stay at home, except for essential purposes, so that we can continue to protect the national health service and, of course, save lives.

Pandemic Preparedness

1. Ruth Davidson (Edinburgh Central) (Con): Over the past 10 months and even before that, Governments across the world made mistakes in their planning for and handling of the pandemic, but today's report by Audit Scotland identifies a lack of preparedness, on the part of the Scottish Government, stretching back more than a decade. Specifically, it charges that Scottish National Party ministers failed to implement key recommendations that were made after pandemic planning exercises in 2015, 2016 and 2018. Reports on exercises Silver Swan, Cygnus and Iris

made 52 specific recommendations. How many of those recommendations had been implemented by the Scottish Government by March 2020?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The Audit Scotland report this morning is important, as are all Audit Scotland reports, and the Government will, as we always do, pay very close attention to it. However, one of the paramount points that the report makes is this:

“The Scottish Government and NHS in Scotland responded quickly to the rapidly developing pandemic”.

On the three pandemic preparedness exercises—Silver Swan in 2015, Cygnus in 2016 and Iris in 2018—I do not have the full list of the 52 recommendations in front of me, but I am happy to arrange for that information to be provided. As a result of those exercises, a range of national and local pandemic guidance and plans were updated to take account of the lessons from those exercises.

One of the key points, which is perhaps not captured fully in the Audit Scotland report, is that what we found ourselves dealing with in February and March last year was not a flu pandemic, so no amount of preparedness for a flu pandemic would have been sufficient in the face of the situation that we encountered. Regardless of how well prepared we had been for flu, it quickly became clear quite that we were dealing with something of a completely different nature.

In fact, in reflecting on the past 10 months—this will be a matter for proper scrutiny, in the fullness of time—I think that the more valid criticism of the Scottish Government, and of Governments across the western world, is that in the early stages of the pandemic we perhaps relied too much on flu preparations and had not done enough to prepare for the experience of severe acute respiratory syndrome-type outbreaks. That is one of the key lessons that Governments, certainly those in the western world, will have to learn. We will add that to the lessons that the Audit Scotland report has for us.

Let me end my answer where I started. According to Audit Scotland,

“The Scottish Government and NHS in Scotland responded quickly to the rapidly developing pandemic”.

Ruth Davidson: It was no surprise that the First Minister did not want to give a number for how many of the 52 recommendations have been implemented, because the Audit Scotland report highlights a catalogue of missed opportunities on the part of the Scottish Government, including failure to ensure proper supply and use of personal protective equipment. It makes it clear that the PPE stockpile

“was not enough to fully meet the demands of the NHS.”

After the 2016 exercise, a working group identified access to PPE as a “priority action” to be completed by March 2018. Exercise Iris, which took place two years before the onset of the Covid pandemic, again warned that the Government needed to up its game on PPE. We simply should not have had national health service staff being forced to work without adequate protection, reusing masks and having to beg for donations because PPE was not in place.

Why did the Scottish Government not act on the repeated warnings that it received in the three reports, when doing so would have meant that doctors, nurses and carers were properly protected?

The First Minister: I do not accept Ruth Davidson’s characterisation and I do not believe that it bears scrutiny. Scotland has never, not once, throughout the entire pandemic run out of PPE. Not only that, but we were, in fact, in a position at an earlier stage of the pandemic to offer mutual aid to other parts of the United Kingdom.

We found two things. [*Interruption.*] I say to the Conservatives that these are serious issues that deserve proper responses and consideration. First, we found that we had to rapidly improve, which we did, the distribution mechanisms for PPE to make sure that it got to the front line quickly. We did that with the NHS. We set up a portal so that anybody who had concerns could quickly raise them and have them addressed.

Of course, in addition to the arrangements for the NHS, we quickly put in place new arrangements to top up the PPE supplies that were available to our care homes across the country.

Some detailed consideration was also required by experts, not politicians, of the particular PPE needs, given—to go back to my earlier point, which cannot just be glossed over—that we were dealing not with a flu pandemic, but with a completely different beast that required, in some respects, a different response.

We took all those steps and we continue to ensure that we have good and robust supplies of the right PPE. Of course we have, into the bargain, also developed a domestic supply chain for PPE. We have not done that by giving contracts to our political chums, as some other Governments have done. Before the pandemic, there was effectively zero Scottish PPE manufacturing; we were wholly reliant on imports. Over the winter period, nearly half of all PPE that has been used in Scotland has been supplied from Scotland.

I would be the last person to try to deny that there are lots of lessons for us to learn. We have

to do that properly as we go through, as well as when we come out of, the pandemic. However, I think that the steps that we have taken are the right ones, and we will continue to make sure that the NHS and wider society are properly equipped.

Ruth Davidson: The First Minister stands there telling us that there was no issue with PPE last year. Perhaps she wants to tell that to Scotland's nurses, half of whom told the Royal College of Nursing that they had been forced to reuse single-use protection.

Tragically, Scotland's care homes have seen more than a third of Scotland's Covid deaths, with more than 3,000 people losing their lives in care homes since March last year. The advice that was handed to the First Minister in three separate reports is that more had to be done to protect social care. That should have been consulted on as far back as 2018. Instead, the consultation did not open until more than a year later. It closed in September 2019, six months before Scotland's first wave of Covid. In those six months, the guidance was never updated; no updates were ever published. Crucially, that means that care homes were left to face the pandemic with guidance that was almost a decade old and was hopelessly out of date.

We know that the Scottish Government is now reviewing the guidance, but it is far too late for too many grieving families. Is it not just a fact that had the First Minister and her Government acted sooner and brought forward guidance, which was demanded before Covid struck, some lives in those care homes could have been saved?

The First Minister: Again, I say no—I do not accept that. In my response to the previous question, I did not say that there were no issues with PPE, but took time to set out properly what the issues were. The issues were not what Ruth Davidson said they were; the issues were to do with distribution, making sure that we had the right types of PPE and then building the domestic supply chain. I know that that does not suit the soundbites that Ruth Davidson wants to hurl across the chamber. I spend each and every day dealing with the fine detail of the issues; that is what I try to share with the public.

It is simply not true to say that guidance was not issued to care homes; guidance was issued to them right at the start of the pandemic. We have taken steps to amend the guidance, as our knowledge and understanding of exactly what it is that we have been dealing with has developed. We will continue to do that.

I have been, and will continue to be, very candid. If we could turn back the clock and have then the knowledge that we have now about the nature of the pandemic that we are dealing with,

we would have done certain things differently in care homes. I desperately wish that we could have that time again. However, we have made sure that, in relation to the guidance, the focus was on infection prevention and control in care homes, and on the use of testing, when our knowledge developed to allow that to change.

Our more recent focus was criticised—certainly, by implication—a couple of weeks ago by Ruth Davidson in her questions about vaccination. However, because we have focused on making sure not only that we offered the vaccine to every older person in a care home, but that we got the vaccine to every older person in a care home, we are now seeing a rapid reduction in deaths in care homes. I am not sure whether that will be exactly mirrored in all other parts of the UK. We will have to wait to see the figures.

There are lessons to learn every day, and I take that very seriously. I do not think that Ruth Davidson does anybody involved a favour by her mischaracterisation of some of the really difficult challenges that we have been dealing with, and which we continue to deal with.

Ruth Davidson: I will read directly from Audit Scotland's report so that there can be no "mischaracterisation". The First Minister mentioned the guidance that was issued to care homes. Page 21 of the report says that

"Flu pandemic guidance published in 2012, designed for health and social care in England, was issued to health and social care in Scotland."

Despite the Scottish Government's having been told in 2018 that it had to update that guidance, it was not opened for consultation until 2019. Even by the time the consultation had closed, six months before Covid hit, the Scottish Government still had not published updated guidance. That represents two years of failure to tell social care accommodation and care home providers what they should be doing and how they should be doing it.

Throughout the pandemic, the First Minister has sought to build her reputation on how she has handled the virus. However, the truth is that her Government was less prepared than it should have been, as is set out in black and white in today's Audit Scotland report. The Government made mistakes. Those mistakes cost the health of front-line workers and the lives of care home residents, and they built up over a decade of delay. The Auditor General's report makes it plain that the First Minister's Government was warned again and again. There were years during which she could have acted. What stopped her?

The First Minister: I just do not think that that bears any serious scrutiny. Every single day over the past 10 months—for almost a year, now—I

have sought to do nothing other than my best, and to ensure that the Government is also doing its best, to steer the country through the pandemic as safely as possible. That is still my focus each and every single day, no matter what attempts Ruth Davidson might make to change that.

All along, I have admitted mistakes. I will continue to ensure that the Government seeks to learn from mistakes as we go. For as long as I live, I will regret the toll that the virus has taken, particularly on the older members of our community and those who live in our care homes.

However, I also know that because of decisions that we have taken and—even more so—because of the efforts of health and social care workers across the country, we in Scotland can say that we have a lower number of cases than other parts of the UK have. We also have a proportionally lower number of deaths. No one should misunderstand my point: the number is still far too high, but the rate is lower than that for England and Wales.

Every single day, we continue to take steps to ensure that we reduce the impact of the virus. That is, right now, all that I seek to do every day, and what I will continue to seek to do.

Ruth Davidson wanted to quote from Audit Scotland's report, so I will do the same. It says that

"Staff across the NHS and Scottish Government have worked hard, in challenging circumstances"

and that

"The Scottish Government and NHS ... responded quickly".

It also says that the actions that were taken prevented

"the NHS from becoming overwhelmed".

What Audit Scotland describes as

"Initial difficulties in supplying and distributing"—

which I mentioned in the context of PPE—were

"resolved and supply is now meeting demand."

I can go on. The report also says:

"The Scottish Government worked to improve the support available for the health and social care workforce during the pandemic"

and it goes on to cover the steps that we are now taking to rebuild and remobilise the health service.

I will continue to try to ensure that the Government learns lessons. However, each and every day, and for as long as it takes, I will stay focused on leading the country through the current circumstances as safely as possible.

Pandemic Preparedness

2. **Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I, too, send my condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to Covid.

The issues highlighted by Audit Scotland's report are so important that I make no apology for covering the subject again. The First Minister has said that the pandemic is unprecedented, and she is right. However, the report that has been published today makes it clear that a pandemic should have been anticipated.

The Government knew that a pandemic could threaten the lives of people across Scotland. It was told that our social care system would struggle to cope. It was warned that access to personal protective equipment for our nurses and doctors simply was not good enough. We have now learned that the Government did not act on any of those warnings. In 2015, 2016 and 2018, the Government received clear recommendations that it simply failed to act on. Exercise Silver Swan, exercise Cygnus and exercise Iris all identified problems, but the Government was just too slow to act. As a result, according to Audit Scotland, the areas that were neglected

"became areas of significant challenge during the Covid-19 pandemic."

The First Minister referenced flu planning, but the flu pandemic planning that the Government carried out repeatedly highlighted vulnerabilities in PPE supplies and in social care—the very areas of challenge in the pandemic. If the Scottish Government had acted in advance, we would have been in a better position to respond, whatever the virus was.

The First Minister had warning after warning after warning, so was her failure to act negligence or incompetence?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I am not even going to respond to that, because it is actually quite demeaning—not to me, but to the people across Government and across the country who have worked every single day to try to deal with the crisis.

I have already alluded to Silver Swan, Cygnus and Iris. All those lessons were properly embedded in the national and local pandemic guidance. However, I come back to the point that this pandemic is not a flu pandemic. In doing so, I am acknowledging what I think is a real criticism of this Government, and of many other Governments as well. Although I think that the Audit Scotland report is really important, this is a point that is missed from the report.

Jackie Baillie says that we should have anticipated a pandemic. Almost on my first day, and certainly in my first week, in government as

the health secretary, I was briefed on the potential for a pandemic—for a flu pandemic—and we did a lot of preparation. We had a flu pandemic in 2009, and we learned lessons from that as well. One of the significant issues that we have to reflect on is the fact that not enough of our planning and preparedness was for a pandemic of the nature of the one that we have been dealing with. Covid and severe acute respiratory syndrome—SARS—type viruses are very different from flu.

Those are lessons that we have been learning and will continue to learn. It is simply not true, and it is not borne out by the facts, to say that we were not prepared on PPE, although, as I have acknowledged not just today but previously, we had issues around the distribution of PPE early on, which we took early action to resolve. In addition, guidance was in place for care homes, and it has adapted and evolved as our understanding of the virus has adapted and evolved.

In the fullness of time, there will be real, proper and detailed scrutiny. I believe that we might still be the only Government in the United Kingdom that has committed to a full public inquiry. However, for now, I and my ministers will continue to get on with the job of making sure that we are taking the country through this, getting more people vaccinated and suppressing the virus so that we can get back to normal as quickly as we can.

Jackie Baillie: I make no criticism of the staff, who I think have been hardworking and absolutely brilliant throughout the pandemic, but the First Minister needs to stop hiding behind them, because this is a matter of leadership and that is something that she is responsible for.

I repeat: flu pandemic planning that the Government carried out repeatedly highlighted vulnerabilities in PPE supplies and in social care. Had the First Minister paid attention to that, as she says that she did, we would not be in this position.

Nowhere has the impact of the pandemic been more distressing than in our care homes. One in every three people to have lost their lives from Covid-19 were care home residents. That is more than 3,000 families who have been bereaved by an epidemic that raced through our care homes—the very places where we expect our elderly and our vulnerable to be safe.

However, concerns about the ability of social care to cope during a pandemic were highlighted five years ago by exercise Cygnus. Exercise Silver Swan recommended that the Government

“Ensure a wide understanding of plans for distribution of PPE and prioritisation of key staff”.

That recommendation was made in April 2016. It was the end of March 2020—nearly four years

later, when the country was already gripped by the pandemic—before the Scottish Government had a PPE distribution model for social care. We know that the PPE was not adequate and there was an initial shortage of supply because health and social care staff told us so. I see that the First Minister is shaking her head, but those are the very staff we praise for their efforts and they were telling us what was going wrong.

Had the First Minister listened to the warnings about the threat facing social care in a pandemic—and, yes, in the context of flu pandemic planning, too—lives could have been saved. Why did she not listen?

The First Minister: First, I have not, in any way, hidden or tried to hide on a single day since the pandemic struck. In fact, on many of the days when, to the best of my ability, I have been seeking to lead the country through the pandemic, Jackie Baillie has been writing letters to the BBC to try and stop me from briefing the public on a daily basis. Therefore, perhaps it is the fact that this Government has shown leadership that Jackie Baillie finds so difficult to take.

Because we learned lessons from the swine flu pandemic that we had in 2009, as well as the exercises that were done, we had a stockpile of PPE at the start of this pandemic. As I said earlier, that is why we never ran out of PPE and why we quickly resolved the early issues that we faced with regard to the distribution of PPE within the health service. To this day, there are on-going concerns from staff, which we listen to very carefully, about the precise nature of the PPE and whether it is adequate to protect them from the virus, particularly as we face new variants. Our clinical advisers listen to and discuss those concerns, so that we can respond as necessary. As I have already said, we took additional steps to top up the PPE supplies that care home providers already had.

We have taken all those steps. Has everything gone as we would have wanted? No; we have made mistakes and done things that, had we had the knowledge that we have now, we would have done differently, and we learn from those as we go. Every day, this Government—with the dedication of people not just in our health and social care workforce, but in many sectors of society—has tried to get through this as well as we can, and every day we will continue to do that.

Jackie Baillie talks about care homes. Because we learned the lessons from care homes earlier last year, we made the decision to focus on getting the maximum number of people in care homes vaccinated—not just offered the vaccine, but vaccinated—even if, early on, that slowed down the rest of the programme. That decision was—certainly by implication—criticised by Jackie Baillie

and Ruth Davidson just a couple of weeks ago. That says it all. They will criticise whatever we do, but we will continue to get on with the job of keeping the people of this country as safe as we can.

Jackie Baillie: I am clear that there was no leadership in preparing for the pandemic. The First Minister referenced stockpiles of PPE but, from staff on the ground, we know that they were inadequate and well out of date. The whole point is not to learn after the event but to learn beforehand, so that we put in measures to prevent the scale of death that we have witnessed. The evidence is that, when presented with recommendations, the Government simply did not listen; it was too slow to prepare and too slow to act. We may have reacted quickly—I welcome that and thank national health service and care staff for doing so—but we were simply not prepared.

Here is an opportunity to listen and act. Do not just clap for health and social care workers; listen and act when they ask for enhanced PPE to protect them and those they care for from the new Covid variants. We know that the rate of hospital-contracted Covid is still far too high. Since the start of the pandemic, at least 3,115 people have contracted Covid-19 in hospital. In the week ending 24 January, the Scottish Government rejected calls from Scottish Labour for enhanced PPE to protect staff and patients from the new variants and dismissed the concerns of the very staff whose attitude and evidence we all value so highly. That same week, at least 228 people contracted Covid-19 on hospital wards. Will the First Minister listen? Will she act and give health and care staff the enhanced protection that they need and deserve?

The First Minister: We did not dismiss those calls. As a politician and former lawyer, I am not qualified to decide the technical specifications of PPE. That is what I have clinical advisers for, and every time that health or social care staff say that they think that they need a higher specification, we ask our clinical advisers to consider that and come to a view. Until now, that has been done on a four-nations basis. We will never dismiss those claims.

The advice to me and to the Government is that the specification of the PPE that is being used is appropriate for even the new variant of Covid. If that advice changes, so, too, will the decisions that we take on PPE. Not just as First Minister—although that is the most important point here—but as the sister and sister-in-law of people who work on the front line of the national health service, I would never dismiss the views of those on the front line of the NHS. We will continue to take those decisions on the basis of the best advice.

We will continue, too, to learn lessons, just as we learned lessons from the 2009 pandemic and

from the exercises. We will also learn the real lessons from the current pandemic, which are that we must learn as we go and must not assume that the pandemics that we will face are the ones that we have faced in the past. I think that the real criticism of Governments such as ours is that we should have been better prepared for a SARS-type virus and should have relied less on flu preparedness. I am able to say that, but let us engage properly on such matters, rather than just chuck soundbites across a parliamentary chamber.

Food Provision (Glasgow)

3. Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): We have all seen the pictures of hundreds of people queueing in the snow for emergency food in Glasgow's George Square last week. That people are experiencing that level of desperation in the city that the First Minister and I represent is an indictment of the failure to tackle poverty and hunger in Scotland.

The charities that feed people in Glasgow have warned that funding is not getting to where it is needed. Last year, 80 organisations got the resources that they needed to provide such emergency relief. This year, it is expected to be less than half that number. I will give an example. The Children's Wood, which runs a holiday club for children in Maryhill, has not received funding. Does the First Minister think that it is acceptable that getting food to hungry children is a postcode lottery in Glasgow? Will she commit to universal solutions, such as extending free school meals to all primary pupils all year round?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I have already made that commitment. We have made it clear that, if we are returned to government, we will provide free school meals to all primary pupils and children in early years all year round. I hope that other parties across the chamber will join us in that so that, whoever emerges victorious from the election in May, we know that that policy will be implemented.

On the wider issue, there is much more that we all need to do to tackle poverty. Like Patrick Harvie, I was appalled and disturbed by the photograph that circulated a few days ago. I asked my officials to look into the circumstances of that and to engage with relevant partners to see what more we can do. Throughout the pandemic, we have increased funding to tackle food insecurity and, specifically, to help people whose poverty is being exacerbated by the pandemic, and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance announced even more funding for that just yesterday.

We will continue to take whatever steps we can to help those who are finding it toughest as a result of the situation that everybody is dealing

with at the moment, but we are also taking the crucial steps to deal with the underlying causes of poverty. Perhaps the most significant thing that has happened in that regard this week is the launch of the new Scottish child payment. Scotland is the only part of the United Kingdom to have such a scheme, which is about lifting children—and, by extension, families—out of poverty. We will continue to do what we can to try to consign poverty to history in our country.

Patrick Harvie: The First Minister does not need to wait until May to commit to the policy of extending eligibility for free school meals; it could be built into the budget that the Parliament will vote on later this month.

The First Minister has made it clear that, as we build a recovery from the pandemic, returning schools to normal will rightly be the first priority but, if we are to do that, we need first to talk about how we keep teachers and support staff safe. Vaccination must have a role to play here. I make it clear that we are not asking the Government to ignore the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. It has recommended the first priority groups but, in the paper that it published at the end of December, it said that occupational groups could be considered for priority in the next phase of the vaccine programme.

Yesterday, the First Minister told my colleague Alison Johnstone that some teachers will have been vaccinated already, but with schools reopening to more pupils from Monday, surely we must ask whether it is safe for those teachers who have not been vaccinated to be sent back into full classrooms without that protection. Does it not stand to reason that, if reopening schools is a high priority, vaccinating the staff who enable those schools to function must be a priority, too?

The First Minister: First, I want to make the point very clearly that we would not be going ahead with the decision that we confirmed yesterday on the phased reopening of schools if we were not assured that it was safe. We are not complacent about it and we do not take these decisions lightly.

Mitigations will be in place in schools. In the senior phase, there will be very limited numbers of pupils there, and we know that the risk of transmission is much lower when we are talking about the younger age groups. We also know from the evidence that the risk from reopening schools comes less from transmission within schools than it does from the behaviour of adults around the reopening of schools, with people taking it as a trigger for a return to normality. That is why I was at such pains yesterday to ask parents across the country not to do that as of Monday.

We are introducing twice-weekly testing for teachers and school staff, which will get under way straight away as schools return from Monday.

It is important to take the points on the issue of vaccination seriously. I know that Patrick Harvie is not suggesting that we do not follow the JCVI, but we are still in the process of vaccinating the JCVI priority list. We hope that we can complete that as soon as possible—even sooner, perhaps, than our original target date—but that is the focus right now.

We are waiting to see whether the JCVI gives us any more detailed advice on the order of priority for the rest of the population. It is absolutely the case that there may be a focus on occupational groups, in which case that is what we will follow. However, there are still unknowns about the vaccines' impact on transmission as opposed to mortality and illness, and that is why, at the moment, it is really important that we follow the clinical priorities that the JCVI is setting.

We will continue to consider the matter with the other nations of the UK and we will set out as soon as we can what the approach will be once we have vaccinated the initial JCVI groups and whether there is an order of priority to be followed for the rest of the population.

Education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Report)

4. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): How can the people of Scotland judge the First Minister on her record on education if she will not publish the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report until after the election?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The timetable of the OECD review that is under way right now has been set by the OECD. It is carrying that out independently for the Scottish Government and it would be wrong for us to seek to dictate to it how it does that or to what timescale. The work was delayed because of the pandemic, not least because of restrictions that the OECD put on the ability of its staff to travel overseas. However, it is work that the OECD is taking forward. I look forward to its conclusions and to making sure that we can take forward any recommendations that it makes.

Willie Rennie: Does the First Minister seriously expect us to believe that, of all the months of the year that the OECD could have picked, it just happened to insist on the one immediately following the election? The Scottish Government has the report already, so the First Minister should publish it now.

The independence of the report is in question because of the interference. The Scottish Government and its agencies have timetabled

months to alter the report. A special group has been established to make changes, but it is dominated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Education Scotland—the very bodies that are under the microscope of the OECD report. We all know that, because it is in the Government's documents that we secured under freedom of information.

How can anyone have confidence in the independence of the report if the Government has the opportunity to meddle with it for months on end?

The First Minister: I am not entirely sure—well, I think that I am sure what Willie Rennie is suggesting, but the idea that the OECD would allow to happen what he has just suggested is happening is completely outrageous, actually. The OECD is a respected organisation. It is carrying out the review for the Scottish Government independently and it has set its timetable.

The preliminary report that the Scottish Government has received is purely for accuracy checking; it is not an opportunity to influence the content or rewrite any part of the report. I do not think that the OECD would wear that, even if the Scottish Government were to attempt it, which it will not. As I understand it, draft findings will be shared with stakeholders, providing an opportunity for key partners to inform the final report. The independent report will be published when the OECD decides that it should be published.

If the Scottish Government was trying to dictate either the way in which the OECD did that, or the timetable to which it did it, I am pretty sure that Willie Rennie would be standing up here right now saying how outrageous and unacceptable that was. We will do this properly. Given how well thought of an organisation the OECD is, I have confidence in it and I trust it to do this and to do it extremely well.

The Presiding Officer: I am conscious that we have taken more than 35 minutes to get through the leaders' questions, so I appeal to members and the First Minister to make their questions and answers succinct.

Child Poverty

5. Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking to tackle child poverty. (S5F-04830)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Monday marked the important milestone of the introduction of the Scottish child payment, which is a key plank in our action to tackle child poverty and a key action in the tackling child poverty delivery plan.

Last year, we spent nearly £2 billion on supporting low-income households, with £673 million focused on support for families with children. Next year, we will almost double our investment in the tackling child poverty fund.

In response to the economic impact of the pandemic, we have invested an additional £51 million to continue the provision of free school meals during school closures and holiday periods, and our £100 Covid winter hardship payment supported more than 144,000 children and young people. We have just confirmed a second round of that payment, to be paid in the spring.

Sandra White: I thank the First Minister for that reply and the very good news about the Scottish child payment, which has been hailed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as “more needed than ever”. However, the Tories at Westminster will not commit to maintaining the £20 uplift to universal credit. Does the First Minister agree that, if the UK Government is serious about tackling child poverty, it should introduce a similar benefit to the Scottish child payment and not cut benefits at a time when many families are struggling to survive?

The First Minister: I agree with that, but I do not think that there is a shred of evidence that the UK Government is at all serious about tackling child poverty. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that, even with the £20 uplift, the average family with children is £2,900 worse off each year than they were a decade ago. If that increase is removed, that figure rises to £3,800 a year. That is the impact on child poverty of the decisions that the UK Government has taken.

The UK Government's own analysis highlights that the number of households that were impacted by the benefit cap nearly doubled last year, with 6,400 households in Scotland losing an average of £50—and 97 per cent of those families have children. It is time that the UK Government stopped hiding its head in the sand about the damage that its policies are causing. A first step—although it would be only a small step—would be to make the £20 increase permanent and extend it to legacy benefits, as well as abolishing the benefit cap, the two-child limit and the abhorrent rape clause. If it wanted to get truly serious about tackling child poverty, it would follow the lead of the Scottish Government and establish the equivalent of the Scottish child payment, so that we can tackle child poverty head on and lift more children out of poverty for good.

Education (Disruption)

6. Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the First Minister what additional and urgent measures will be taken to ensure that pupils catch

up on learning lost as a result of the disruption to their education. (S5F-04825)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We have prioritised children receiving in-person learning throughout the pandemic, which is why we confirmed yesterday that children in primaries 1 to 3 and some senior-phase pupils will return to school next week, as will children in early years settings. To support that, we are investing a further £100 million in education recovery and additional family support, as we announced yesterday. That is in addition to existing investment such as the £127 million in pupil equity funding to support those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

For older pupils, we were able to provide clarity yesterday that national 5, higher and advanced higher exams in 2021 will be replaced by an alternative certification model that is based on teachers' judgment of the evidence of individual pupil attainment.

Jamie Greene: It may be true that some children are returning to school next week, but 11 months of disruption to classroom education will come at a great price—let us not fool ourselves. It is what we do now that will make the difference.

The First Minister has repeatedly told us that she will consider any proposals or ideas, wherever they come from. However, beyond warm words, very little action has followed. We have put forward sensible proposals for an urgent national tutoring scheme and for pulling in resource from anywhere we can to help those pupils to catch up. That would result in clear and immediate benefits. Will the First Minister take that issue forward and discuss those proposals in great detail with me? If not, why not?

The First Minister: I am sure that the Deputy First Minister will be delighted to discuss that proposal and any other proposals directly with Jamie Greene. I have said before that tutoring provision is available through the e-Sgoil platform, and we will, of course, continue to look at how we can extend and expand that.

It is not the case that we are not taking action now. As recently as yesterday, we confirmed even more investment to support local authorities and schools to help pupils to catch up on their education. Previously in the pandemic, we have made available resources that have allowed an additional 1,400 teachers to be recruited. The investment that the Deputy First Minister announced a few weeks ago will allow even more new teachers to be recruited if local authorities think that that is the appropriate use of that funding.

We will continue to focus on how we support children to catch up on education, but a wider and

bigger imperative and responsibility is to consider holistically how we will, as we come out of the pandemic, help to repair the overall damage that has been done to children's wellbeing. That will partly be about education, but there will be bigger things for us to consider, as well. That will require our focus for a considerable time to come.

Unsafe Cladding (Replacement)

7. **Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister how the consequential from the recently announced £3.5 billion of funding to replace unsafe cladding in England will be allocated, and whether buildings under 18m will be included in any grant scheme. (S5F-04820)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are still waiting for the details of the consequential and of what the new levy and tax on developers will comprise. Two recent consultations on guidance—by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Scottish Government—have shown that it is not only buildings of 18m and above that need to be considered. Our view is that the scale of risk as a whole needs to be considered, rather than risk being assessed only on the basis of the height of the building that people live in. That undoubtedly makes the task more complex in respect of scale, availability of information and ensuring that public money is used to the greatest effect. However, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning will set out a sustainable path forward next month. We hope that, by that time, we will know the details of the consequential so that we can set out more details of how they will be used.

Sarah Boyack: The Scottish Government has already had £97 million of consequential to address the cladding issue. We need urgency on that. The Grenfell tower fire was in 2017. I have a constituent who has an EWS1 form that cost £3,000 but who still cannot sell their home and move on. Our constituents are under immense pressure because they are not able to make their buildings safe, they are trapped in unsaleable homes and they have not had any support. They need that support urgently.

Will the First Minister ensure that there is urgent progress on the issue? There is already £97 million in the budget, which could be spent. We know where a lot of these buildings are, and there has been progress on the high-rise inventory; we just need action. Our constituents are trapped, and the immense financial and mental pressures that they are under need to be addressed urgently.

The First Minister: I agree with much, if not all, of what Sarah Boyack has said. I have constituents in that position, as well, so I know about the stress and anxiety that the issue is causing.

It is important that we get it right and that we have done the work to establish the scale of the problem and the nature of the buildings whose owners will require help so that, when we disburse taxpayers' money to help, we do that in a way that helps the maximum number of people. That is why the work that has been done is so important.

I absolutely accept that there is a need for urgency. That is why, as I said in my initial answer, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning will set out the pathway forward next month. We will then be able to give greater clarity and certainty to owners who are in that position, based on the foundation of proper consideration and research that I have spoken about.

Learning Disabilities (Covid-19 Vaccinations)

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): Following the publication of mortality data for people who have a learning disability in Scotland, the cross-party group on learning disability and Enable have asked the Government to ensure that every person with a learning disability in Scotland is supported to come forward for vaccination, including younger adults in care home settings, who are at particular risk. The First Minister will perhaps have read the moving story of author Ian Rankin, whose disabled son, Kit, is still waiting for the vaccine. NHS England has just issued guidance to general practitioners recommending that they identify, invite and support all people who have a learning disability to come forward. Will the Scottish Government also do that?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We will consider whether we need to take further action. However, it is important to point out right now that, as the member knows, there are a range of people with learning disabilities who have been clinically judged already as being clinically extremely vulnerable and who therefore will have been vaccinated as part of cohort 4. They are one of the groups for which we had the target date of early this week to meet. I think that we will publish the data on this later today, or certainly by later this week, but around 140,000 people who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable have been vaccinated. That is an uptake of around 80 per cent. The original estimate in our deployment plan was around 110,000, so we have exceeded that already.

Some of those who have profound learning difficulties, though, as well as unpaid carers, will not be vaccinated as part of that cohort. As things stand, they will be offered vaccination as part of cohort 6. The invitations for appointments for people in cohort 6 should start to issue from next week, so people in that group will then start to get certainty about when their vaccination will be delivered.

QCovid Risk Assessment Tool (Shielding)

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): Does the Scottish Government plan to utilise the QCovid risk prediction model that has been developed by the University of Oxford to expand the criteria for those who are placed on the shielding list?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are considering the QCovid list further. The findings of the QCovid tool have already led to some groups being added to the shielding list in Scotland, such as people with chronic kidney disease, stage 5 Down syndrome or severe liver disease. However, the model was developed using death and hospitalisation data from England, so the advice that the Government has had is that more work needs to be done to validate the tool more fully in relation to Scottish data before we can be confident about using it more widely in Scotland. Options around that are being considered at the moment, and we will continue to work with partners to understand how it can work in the context of Scottish health data.

As for the people who were spoken of in the previous answer, the vast majority of those who would have been identified through QCovid are likely to have already been included in group 4 or group 6 of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation priority list.

Scottish Child Payment (Applications)

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): As at last Sunday, the Scottish Government had received only 77,000 applications for the Scottish child payment. That means that, even if all the applications are approved, only 44.5 per cent of the 173,000 children who are estimated by the Scottish Fiscal Commission to be eligible for it will receive the payment. The First Minister will know that the deadline was two days ago, on 15 February. However, those figures mean that almost 100,000 parents of children who probably need the payment have, for some reason, not applied.

Given the First Minister's commitment on child poverty, which she has reiterated today, will she consider extending that deadline to ensure that the take-up is much higher? Does she agree that, in the long run, this situation makes the case that we need to automate such payments, complicated though that would be, to ensure that families who need the child payment—families who live in poverty—can get access to it?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I agree with the point on automation. We certainly want to automate more systems through Social Security Scotland, although it is also very important that people have the option of talking to somebody

face to face, as we know that not having that option can sometimes be a barrier.

We will continue to encourage maximum uptake. The deadline for applying for backdated payments was this week, but of course people can make new applications if they decide that they want to do so. There is a big job for all of us to do to make sure that the people we represent are aware of the new benefits and know how to apply for them. I took the opportunity, in one of the Covid briefings this week—because this issue is very relevant in the context of the financial challenges of Covid—to share the details of how people can apply. The Government will continue to take every opportunity to do that.

National Care Service

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Unsurprisingly, and despite calling for the establishment of a national care service, yesterday Labour members chose to vote with the Tories against the Scottish Government's motion that committed to establishing such a service. Will the First Minister set out what else they voted against last night?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): There was some muttering from Labour members. I can only take that to mean that they found their decision as inexplicable as we did.

The motion that Labour voted against, with the Tories, last night was about scrapping non-residential social care charging, providing unpaid carers with improved recognition and support, improving pay and terms and conditions to reflect fair work principles, bringing in national pay bargaining and establishing a national care service in law on an equal footing with NHS Scotland. I know why the Tories would have voted against all that, but for the life of me, I cannot work out why Labour would. However, maybe that starts to explain some of the reasons why Labour is pretty much in the doldrums.

Covid-19 Quarantine Regulations (Offshore Workers)

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Following the announcement of the extended quarantine regulations, constituents in the oil and gas sector have raised concerns that offshore workers who support overseas projects on a two-two rota would have to spend 10 of their 14-day field break alone in a hotel room. They understand the need to minimise the chance of introducing new variants as well as the need to restrict exemptions, but, given the unique nature of the offshore rota, will the First Minister consider reviewing the list of exemptions to allow those overseas workers to self-isolate at home?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We have already said that we will consider any arguments that are made for particular groups, so I suppose that the short answer is yes, we will consider that. However, I follow that up immediately with a strong caveat. The more exemptions that we have from the managed isolation policy, the more chance there will be of new variants of the virus coming into the country. We therefore have to balance all that and come to the best position overall.

As we suppress the virus and vaccinate more people—we are doing both successfully right now—the bigger risk that we face will increasingly be the importation of new variants of the virus that might spread more quickly and be able to beat lockdown restrictions; more seriously, they might undermine the efficacy of the vaccines that we have at our disposal right now. That is why we need to exercise the utmost caution over borders and travel.

We will continue to consider fairly any calls for greater flexibility, but we will apply a rigorous assessment to such calls because we do not want to undermine the effectiveness of the policy that we have put in place any more than is already the case, given that we do not yet have a four-nations approach.

National Child Payment

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): My question is a supplementary to question 5 from Sandra White.

Scottish Labour welcomes the introduction of the national child payment, albeit that its introduction will be later than we would have wanted. We know that the payment will make a difference to many families and help to tackle child poverty. However, given the terrible impact of the pandemic on women's employment in particular, can the First Minister confirm that there is sufficient capacity to respond rapidly to changes in household circumstances? Can she also advise whether the data collected on claimants will be disaggregated by sex?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I am not entirely sure—and that is my fault, not hers—what Elaine Smith means by “sufficient capacity” to deal with changes in household incomes, but I am happy to come back to her with more detail. We are trying to respond rapidly with support, including financial support, to the circumstances that people face. We will continue to do that. We have people across Government who are focused on that kind of work.

On the data that we will produce from the payment, again I will check exactly what data will be made available, and with what frequency and

degree of disaggregation. I will make sure that I write to the member with that information as soon as possible.

Brexit (Logistics Sector)

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Only this morning, a survey by Logistics UK of its members, most of whom are hauliers or manufacturers, showed that, since Brexit, almost half—48.4 per cent—had transport operations to deliver goods to the European Union or Northern Ireland cancelled or postponed. An astonishing 88 per cent of them cited problems with customs. A significant proportion of them do not expect to return to pre-Brexit operational levels, citing uncertainty and reduced trading confidence, which will inevitably impact on jobs and our economy. Although the solutions lie mostly with the United Kingdom Government, how will the Scottish Government assist our key logistics sector at this difficult time?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The Scottish Government and different ministers and officials have been working with logistics companies and key export sectors to do everything that we can to help with the extreme difficulties that they have been facing since the end of the transition period at the start of the year. It is fair to say that much of our focus has been on the seafood exporting sector, because the damage that has been done to it has been very severe—frankly, what they have been dealing with is unforgivable.

The impacts for our exporters and logistics companies have been extreme. Some of those impacts will, I hope, be resolved by action that the UK Government takes, but I am not sure that we will see trading patterns return completely to normal because I think that they risk being changed for the long term. That will mean a loss to Scotland in financial terms, probably in jobs and in overall economic activity. It illustrates just how wrong-headed and ideologically driven Brexit was, and it is the Tories who bear the responsibility for it.

Covid-19 (Hospital-acquired Infection)

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Serious concerns are being raised regarding the soaring number of patients in Scottish hospitals who are acquiring Covid-19 while being treated for an unrelated illness. Public Health Scotland data has revealed the concerning number of patients affected. What measures will the Scottish Government put in place to ensure that increased infection control is undertaken in all our hospitals?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): There is a significant and strong focus on infection control

in our hospitals. This morning, I looked at the latest data on Covid nosocomial infection, which has just been published today—the nature of the collection and analysis of that data means that there is a three-week time lag.

There is a reduction in the total number of cases that are deemed to be probable or definite hospital onset, although the proportion is still a little bit higher. What we find, and have found, with Covid is that the trend of hospital-acquired infection mirrors that of community transmission. The figures published today are from a period when community transmission was still much higher than it is right now and we hope that, as community transmission has reduced, so too will hospital infection.

Every day, the people who work in our hospitals focus very hard on minimising the prospect and possibility of not just Covid but all infections being passed on. The data that the member refers to is looked at very closely so that teams on the ground know whether there is more that they can do. However, one of the key lessons in the context of Covid is that the relationship between community and hospital transmission is quite strong, so the more we can do to reduce community transmission, the more we help to reduce transmission in our hospitals as well.

The Presiding Officer: I apologise to those members we were not able to reach. We will return at 2.30 with Liberal Democrat business.

13:32

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Education

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Lewis Macdonald): I remind members that social distancing measures are in place in the chamber and across the Holyrood campus. I ask that members take care to observe the measures, including when entering and exiting the chamber, and when accessing or leaving their seats.

The next item of business is a Scottish Liberal Democrat Party debate on motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): Education must be at the heart of the recovery. It is a great liberal cause. School closures and remote learning were never going to be easy, but teachers, pupils and parents have worked flat out to make it work, as best they can. It has been a time of great disruption and worry, and it will take time for education to bounce back.

I want to focus on what children and young people really need. We should be making every hour that is spent in school count for more. More resources are needed in every classroom, cuts to additional support must be reversed and more supported study is needed to help children to work through problems and to consolidate understanding.

If primary 1 children are not ready to start school in August, they should be guaranteed nursery funding, not a £4,500 bill that forces parents to make a decision that is not in the best interests of the child.

This is not about making children sit at desks for longer—it is about the quality of the experience. However, it is clear that Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority cannot be trusted with the critical job of helping the education system to bounce back. Those Scottish Government agencies have let down hard-working teachers, pupils and parents. Members would be hard pressed to find many of them thanking their lucky stars for the help of Education Scotland and the SQA over the past year.

We should remember that, despite months of warnings, the SQA and John Swinney teamed up to create an exam system that crushed ambitions. They concocted an algorithm that penalised pupils from the poorest backgrounds. Teachers were cut out of that process by the SQA and told that their pupil assessments could not be trusted.

We all remember Education Scotland before the pandemic generating 20,000 pages of guidance on curriculum for excellence. It was impossible to

navigate. However, during the pandemic, it has gone to the other end of the scale. For long periods, it was totally absent when people needed it most. The Government will say that remote learning was unprecedented—it was. That is when Education Scotland should have been leading with the support that schools required, but it let people down in the first lockdown and has not been much better in the second lockdown.

The job of education recovery is too important to entrust to organisations that were on borrowed time before the pandemic struck. As my motion recalls, both organisations narrowly escaped reform back in 2017.

As members examined forensically in the debate on 29 March 2017, Education Scotland is responsible for what happens in the classroom and for inspecting its implementation. That is a fundamental conflict of interests that did not work then, and certainly does not work now. I want to re-establish the independence of the inspectorate. On the SQA, most importantly we highlighted the total breakdown in trust between it and teachers. That has only become worse.

On that day in 2017, Scottish National Party and Green votes allowed the organisations to drift towards the pandemic without reform. Our definitive call for their overhaul was watered down, then sunk without trace by John Swinney. His amendment today tries to do exactly the same again. Therefore, I am pleased that the Greens are on board, so we can make progress. I thank the Greens for their support today.

The balance in education must change. Out should go centralised bureaucracies, with their token teachers on committees. In must come an education system that is overseen by people with current and direct teaching experience—the teachers who have been bursting with good ideas throughout the pandemic, and who have worked incredibly hard for their pupils. Let us get those experts back in charge.

Last spring, Parliament unanimously backed an independent review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to get to the bottom of diminishing subject choice and why the education performances of other countries are overtaking ours. I suspect that other members will agree that we probably would not have voted for the review, had the Scottish Government laid bare its true plans. It has the first draft and has timetabled in months in which to “provide comments”. As Keir Bloomer, the architect of curriculum for excellence, told the *Sunday Post*:

“That is less than objective.”

The OECD review is being advised and shaped by a Scottish practitioners forum. That sounds sensible until we discover that Education Scotland

and the SQA dominate that small group—the very bodies whose performance and policies are under the microscope. They are not independent and they are not practitioners, so what on earth are they doing on an advisory practitioners forum? Scottish Liberal Democrats' freedom of information request found documents stating that the group would be

“considering preliminary findings and supporting development of the report.”

The Government should end the meddling and publish the report now, so that people can judge the First Minister on her stated number 1 priority of education, and we can finally get on with helping Scottish education to bounce back.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that the support, services and decision-making provided by Education Scotland and the SQA have not met the expectations or requirements of hardworking teachers, pupils or parents throughout the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; recalls that serious concerns existed about the performance and structure of these organisations for years before the pandemic struck, including those expressed by Parliament in its resolution on the debate on motion S5M-04920 on 29 March 2017; considers that there is compelling evidence that neither body is fit for purpose and that they have lost the confidence of teachers, pupils and parents, and therefore calls for substantial reform as part of the recovery of education, with Education Scotland separated into independent inspection and policy functions and the SQA to be grounded in the teaching profession and made more accountable, and expresses concern about the reported involvement of both organisations and the Scottish Government in the ongoing OECD review.

14:36

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): The pandemic has presented enormous challenges for our education system and our young people. The cancellation of the examination diets and the move to remote learning have been unprecedented but were, sadly, required.

The health, wellbeing and learning of our young people and education staff have been priorities throughout, and although I do not claim that we have got everything right, we have made judgments in the most testing of circumstances. Such judgments are about keeping our young people and staff safe, maintaining learning and the benefits that come from teaching, and ensuring that young people's life chances are not negatively impacted.

As we have charted our way through the pandemic, teachers, support staff and other professionals in our schools, local authorities, national agencies, regional collaboratives and other bodies have been working day in and day

out with dedication, commitment and professionalism to support our young people. Their efforts are a credit to our education system and our country.

It serves neither the country nor our children and young people to attack the contributions of some of those staff—in Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority—in return for their efforts. My amendment would therefore remove from the motion the gratuitous and unfounded criticism of the public servants in Education Scotland and the SQA who have worked hard, alongside local authority and school staff and many others, to ensure continuity of education for children and young people. I thank them for their efforts.

Very strong support has been provided across the system, which has been working in collaboration in the face of the threats to education that Covid presents. Education Scotland and SQA have been central to those efforts. Throughout the pandemic, Education Scotland has provided substantial support to learners, teachers and parents. The national e-learning offer provides live and recorded supported learning resources. Professional learning and support for teaching remotely are available, including for wellbeing and wider professional learning. Targeted work takes place with local authorities and schools to support the system on the ground.

For more than a decade before the pandemic, Education Scotland had been delivering the Glow Connect national online learning platform. That foresight meant that we had the tools in place to move to remote learning, and allowed the development of online content offers, including e-Sgoil and the West Partnership's online school. Last week, Glow had more than 366,000 users logging in a total of more than 2.4 million times.

To support the quality of remote learning delivery, Education Scotland has undertaken five national overview reports since schools returned in January. Those show

“clear evidence that schools have learned from the previous lockdown and are continuing to improve their remote learning offer”.

Mr Rennie mentioned not a single one of the contributions to our education system that have been made by Education Scotland.

As Education Scotland does, the SQA remains absolutely committed to delivering for learners in Scotland. The SQA has worked with the rest of the education system to ensure that learners get the results that they have worked hard for, while maintaining the credibility and standards of qualifications, which members of Parliament have, over the years, generally agreed are important.

Certification has been a very difficult task for all the nations of the United Kingdom—a task that we did not get right for all, at the first attempt last year. That is why I apologised to learners and it is why I commissioned Professor Priestley to review events to ensure that we learn from them and make improvements.

The SQA has engaged widely with stakeholders, particularly in leading partners in co-design of the alternative certification model for this year, and in establishing a learner panel to inform its decisions. The SQA consulted widely on modifications to courses, and has published 116 subject-specific guidance documents on reducing evidence requirements while preserving the validity of, and public confidence in, qualifications. It has also published 134 individual assessment resources to support teachers and lecturers in their assessment activity. Those steps have been significant in making good progress in development of the certification model for 2020-21, with further details that were announced yesterday by the national qualifications 2021 group providing greater certainty to the system.

The support that has been provided to our children and young people to ensure that they can continue to learn and develop is down to the hard work and commitment of the professionals in our schools and elsewhere in the system, including in our national agencies. All of them deserve thanks and recognition from Parliament for their resilience and flexibility, and for the contribution that they continue to make. They do not deserve the gratuitous terminology in the Liberal Democrat motion.

A contribution that extends well beyond the response to the pandemic has been made by all the different players, and includes important work on the future of Scottish education, such as the independent review of Scotland's curriculum.

The OECD review is looking at many aspects of implementation of Scotland's curriculum, including the roles and responsibilities of national agencies in providing support and guidance for the curriculum. The Government is always open to considering how best those arrangements should be designed.

The review has been taken forward following OECD methodology and clear guidelines. It will share draft findings from that work in March, with a final report to be published in June, as I outlined to Parliament last April. The OECD is clear that

"Taking into account the current stage of the process and past experience conducting such reviews, the report will be finalised and is expected to be ready for publication in June 2021".

I look forward to considering the recommendations from the review— [*Interruption.*] I am afraid that I

cannot take an intervention because I have to draw my remarks to a close.

I look forward to considering the recommendations of the review when it is fully concluded. That will be important as we emerge from the pandemic and maintain our relentless pursuit of excellence and equity in education in Scotland. That is the key priority of the Scottish Government pre-Covid and post-Covid, and is what we will devote our efforts to, to ensure that it is the case, in order to provide the best future and the best opportunities to the learners of Scotland.

I move amendment S5M-24137.3, to leave out from "the support" to end and insert:

"teachers, support staff and other professionals working in the education system, whether in schools, local authorities, national agencies, regional collaboratives or other bodies, have provided very strong support to Scotland's children and young people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to help them to continue to learn and develop, and have shown resilience, commitment and flexibility in responding to the impact of the pandemic, including during periods of remote learning or when alternative approaches to certification have been developed in partnership, and considers that teachers and others working in the education system deserve thanks and recognition from the Parliament in light of their work during the pandemic, including their role in continuing to contribute to important work on the future of Scottish education, such as the independent review of Curriculum for Excellence led by the OECD."

14:43

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): Punxsutawney Phil is paraded every February to curious spectators. If he sees his own shadow, he retreats, and they are destined to more wintry gloom; if he does not, spring arrives and brings about a change in the air—and would that not be nice?

Groundhog day, however, is where it all goes very wrong: history repeats itself and there is nothing that anyone can do about it—it sounds like the plot of a movie. Mr Swinney is our very own Phil Connors, trapped in the endless gloom of this endless loop, and that sums up today's debate.

I might be new to the education brief, but my goodness, have we not been talking about curriculum reform and systemic problems in education for quite some time in this Parliament? Iain Gray, Tavish Scott and Liz Smith, in debate after debate after debate, have been warning for years of concerns from the teaching profession—chiefly, that Education Scotland and the SQA are not just the by-product of politically misguided judgments but, on occasion, the cause of them. If people do not believe me, they should ask the hundreds of people who protested outside this very Parliament last summer when the exams fiasco saw their grades marked down and a

system that was designed to do right by them did anything but that.

The OECD's most recent review of the curriculum for excellence, which was in 2015, raised serious concerns about the complexity of the system's layers and dimensions and asked existential questions about the CFE's comprehensibility.

In 2017, the Parliament called for Education Scotland's inspection and policy functions to be separated. What came of that? Nothing. In 2019, the Education and Skills Committee raised more serious concerns about Education Scotland's role and highlighted gaps in its knowledge about the challenges that our schools face and about the curriculum's implementation. The system was designed to offer schools choice, flexibility and freedom, but it was often misunderstood and resulted in delivery that was so variable that equity and fairness were far from being its defining principles.

As for last year, where do we start? We cannot hide the shared frustration of MSPs across the spectrum at the SQA's sheer arrogance and its approach to last year's exams fiasco. The SQA said, "We did only what we were asked to do." I asked the SQA for an outright apology to Scotland's young people, but no such apology was offered.

It takes guts to admit that the system might have faults, and I give Mr Swinney credit for commissioning a second review in 2019. Its remit was expanded to cover a full review of the broad general education. What happened when the issue was voted on in Parliament? The Government resisted—of course it did—but it was defeated, thankfully, as has been the case on many education issues in this parliamentary session. That is because education is one of the unusual things that unite Opposition parties, especially when there is a minority Government.

The current OECD report is vital because it will do two things. First, it will shine a light on faultlines in our education system. We all know that reform is not possible if we do not know what we are reforming or why. Secondly, it should allow the public to decide for themselves whether the Government's track record in education means that the Government is worthy of another five years.

Here is the problem, folks. The first of those objectives must scare the daylight out of the Government. As for the second issue, we will not know about the report until days after the public have cast their ballots. The cabinet secretary can call me a cynic, but I think that that reeks. That is why my amendment is crucial. I ask colleagues

again to send the strong message to the Government that we will not be having it.

If the cabinet secretary wants to be judged on his record, he is being handed on a big silver platter a report that I have no doubt will extol the virtues of his track record. However, given the First Minister's woeful response at First Minister's question time today that fudged the reasons why she wants to bury the report until after the election, how can the Parliament have confidence in her sincerity?

Was Keir Bloomer wrong to assert that the Government has stage managed the situation to prevent the OECD from finding out the education community's opinion? Why would he make that stuff up? The cabinet secretary referred to that on the radio this morning. What would Keir Bloomer gain from doing that? [*Interruption.*] I am happy to give way if I can get another minute for my speech—but I see that I cannot.

Let us not beat about the bush. Parents, teachers and pupils will see right through the Government's lamentable attempts to cover up its scorecard. The Government is doing that because it knows one thing only—that the report will shine a light on 14 years of failure to listen and to act.

I move amendment S5M-24137.1, to insert at end:

“, and, given the urgency of the matter and limited opportunity for scrutiny, and in the spirit of full transparency, calls on the Scottish Government to immediately release any findings already reportedly delivered to the Scottish Ministers by the OECD.”

14:47

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): As we come to the end of the parliamentary session, it is worth reflecting—as Willie Rennie did—on what the Parliament said about such issues at the start of the session. Then, the Government was going to reorganise the governance of school education in its flagship education bill. That bill sank without trace and took the governance review with it, except for the creation of regional improvement collaboratives, which seem to have little troubled the lives of teachers, pupils and parents and education policy, to be honest.

John Swinney: Will Mr Gray give way?

Iain Gray: Certainly—for a quick intervention.

John Swinney: Mr Gray mentioned regional improvement collaboratives. Does he recognise that a great amount of the learning that is now available has been put together through them? Is he comfortable associating himself with the Liberal Democrat motion's criticism of hard-working public servants?

Iain Gray: Mr Swinney refers to the criticism of the national bodies. The review four years ago glided by Education Scotland and the SQA, which sailed on serenely and were untouched. In the meantime in our schools, the curriculum narrowed and pupils took exams in fewer subjects—especially in schools that serve our more deprived communities. Some subjects, such as some modern languages, almost disappeared from the curriculum. The practice of teaching two, three or even sometimes four course levels in a single class became systemic, which was not for a good educational reason but as a way of managing limited resources—particularly because of not having enough teachers. The number of pupils who were identified as requiring additional support soared, while the actual additional support plummeted.

Where were those key educational bodies Education Scotland and the SQA when that was going on? Frankly, they were missing in action. In repeated appearances before the Education and Skills Committee, they first denied that the problems existed at all and then told us that they did not know how widespread multilevel teaching was or whether subjects were being squeezed out of the curriculum. They told us that they were not really sure whether our children were being taught in a three-year-plus-three-year curricular model or a two-plus-two-plus-two model, and they could not tell us whether that mattered. Meanwhile, the SQA continues to assess courses with designated teaching hours that cannot be fitted into the curriculum for excellence timetable.

When the pandemic hit, teachers—who did a heroic job in moving to remote learning virtually overnight—were left for months without leadership from Education Scotland to support those efforts. The cabinet secretary talked about the Education Scotland reviews of remote learning in the second lockdown. He is right that such reviews are taking place, but those are mostly reviews of what everyone else is doing to make remote learning work; they are not about what Education Scotland is doing.

Meanwhile, as Jamie Greene said, the SQA ignored months of advice that it was designing a certification model that was an accident waiting to happen—and, indeed, it happened. We seem to have learned so little. Only this morning, we had yet another iteration of SQA advice, months after exams were cancelled for the second time, when time is again running out and teachers have been saying for many weeks that they needed that information earlier.

Prior to the pandemic, the Parliament, seized of the seriousness of the problems, and without confidence in Education Scotland or the SQA to even recognise, never mind fix, those problems,

forced the cabinet secretary to the review. Now we discover that, although that work is in his hands, he intends to use to use the pandemic as an excuse to deny the Parliament sight of the findings. That is not good enough, and the performance of Education Scotland and the SQA has not been good enough, either. It is not gratuitous to say that clearly this afternoon; it is absolutely necessary.

14:53

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): I thank the Liberal Democrats for bringing the issue to the chamber for debate. I am glad, in particular, to have the opportunity to expand on the calls that I made last week for the SQA management board to be replaced.

Nothing that we are raising this afternoon is new to the Government or to Education Scotland or the SQA. We need only look back at the Education and Skills Committee's damning 2017 reports to see how extensively the problems that we are debating have been detailed before. In the course of its 2017 inquiries, the committee found unclear guidance, poor-quality exam papers, the imposition of onerous workloads on teachers and an ivory tower culture at both agencies.

Trust between the teaching profession and the SQA had broken down long before last year's grading debacle. The exams authority is not seen as a partner or a support; it is seen by teachers as an antagonist. There is a problem with the management culture at the SQA. We are talking about a management that, pre-pandemic, appeared far too often to be preoccupied by its international business work, rather than focusing on addressing the serious concerns that had been raised by Parliament and by the teaching profession. Although some progress was made in reining in the deeply questionable regular business class travel and luxury hotel stays of senior staff, I do not consider the issues that were revealed by whistleblowers to be fully resolved, and I expect the authority to detail a new approach long before such international travel once again becomes a possibility.

Back at home, the SQA's failures have been laid bare by the pandemic. Last year's grading system was a scandal. Over 75,000 pupils saw their grades downgraded for no other reason than their postcode. I am proud of the role that the Scottish Greens played in having those grades restored to the levels that pupils actually deserved. The scandal of the grading shambles was not just the results, though; it was also the utter unwillingness of the SQA and the Scottish Government to listen to concerns or demonstrate even the most basic standards of transparency. Many of us warned for months of exactly what was to transpire. This

Parliament twice demanded to see the algorithm, but we were rebuffed. The disaster was completely avoidable.

However, it was not just last year that there were problems. Despite a period of school closures being one of the most predictable outcomes for this year, I found in January that the SQA had not scenario planned for it. That lack of preparation nearly a year into the pandemic is scandalous.

Public confidence in the SQA is all but non-existent, and that is why I have asked for the resignations of the current board of management. In their place, I have proposed a board structure that would see the SQA overseen by those who are qualified in education and those who are directly impacted by its delivery. That means that the majority of members should be teachers or lecturers who are registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Seats should be reserved for teaching unions, a headteacher, a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament and a parent or carer.

I say this without any personal animosity towards current SQA board members, one of whom I would call a friend, but it is a damning indictment of education governance in Scotland that there are more management consultants than GTCS-registered educators on the board of our national qualifications agency. By reforming the board into one that properly represents Scottish education, we can start to rebuild trust between the SQA and those whom it is meant to serve. That can only be the start of the process, though.

Willie Rennie mentioned—fairly—how the Greens voted following a Liberal Democrat debate in 2017. I am prepared to hold my hands up and say that I called that one wrongly. Given that it came so soon after the Education and Skills Committee's damning reports, I wanted to give both agencies and the Scottish Government an opportunity to respond and to demonstrate their willingness to change. However, my trust was misplaced and they have not done so.

Having spent the four years since then relentlessly investigating, questioning and debating the performance of both agencies, I am content in the closing weeks of this session of Parliament with the role that I and my party have played in pushing for change. Today, however, the Greens will support the motion and both Opposition amendments. For Education Scotland and the SQA, time is up. Scotland's pupils and teachers and the public at large deserve so much better than what those agencies have delivered. This afternoon, Parliament will deliver our verdict, and it is incumbent on the Government to respect that and to act.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We are tight for time. I ask all members henceforth to stick to their allotted time.

14:57

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): There is no doubt that teachers, pupils and parents have had the most difficult year due to the Covid-19 pandemic—a year like no other, and one that I hope we are gradually moving out of.

The Liberal Democrats' motion makes very serious criticism of the action—or inaction, as they see it—of two education bodies: the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Education Scotland. As a member of the Education and Skills Committee, I am aware of the dissatisfaction with those bodies. They are far from perfect, and it would be hypocritical of me to defend them at every level. The committee has heard empirical evidence that communication by both organisations with teaching staff and, by extension, parents and pupils has been poor, both during the pandemic and pre-pandemic.

However, the Liberal Democrats' motion and the Opposition amendments are extreme, and extremely unhelpful. They completely ignore the unprecedented challenge that the organisations have been up against for almost a year now, during Covid-19. The Deputy First Minister made it clear that lessons needed to be learned from the initial awards that were given in 2020, which was, as we know, unsuccessful to say the least. That is why swift action was taken to commission the rapid review of the awarding of grades.

The distress that was caused to many pupils throughout Scotland through the use of an algorithm for the awarding of grades was unacceptable, and that was quickly acknowledged by the Government and the education bodies. We have moved on, and hopefully lessons have been learned.

The provision of online and remote learning continues to improve during the second lockdown. I am aware of that from feedback from constituents, as I am sure other members are. In a survey of more than 12,000 parents by Education Scotland, most said that they had had helpful communication about arrangements for remote learning, which is encouraging to hear.

Considerable work has been going on throughout the pandemic. Education Scotland digital officers have delivered 134 webinars for more than 7,500 practitioners. In addition, Education Scotland has provided a named contact for every headteacher in Scotland, allowing headteachers a single point of contact.

The SQA is mindful of last year's experience and I am optimistic that communication with teachers will be quicker and more transparent. The cabinet secretary has outlined the many areas in which proactive support is being offered to teaching staff this year.

There is no doubt about the additional burden that home learning is placing on many children and their families, and, of course, on teachers, many of whom are struggling to home school their own children while teaching online.

It is important to stress that the operational responsibility for schools lies with local authorities, and they have received considerable additional funding from the Scottish Government. A further £40 million has been awarded to help councils implement safety mitigations for the return to school, aligned with clinical advice and £60 million of additional investment in education recovery, which includes money for employing more teachers and classroom support staff and for facilities management.

The OECD review was undertaken to help us better understand how curriculum for excellence has been implemented across the country, after a committee inquiry recommendation. Following the 2020 SQA exam results, the Scottish Government asked the OECD to expand that work and to have a deeper focus on the assessment and qualifications approach in the senior phase. Ministers have been working with the OECD to scope the additional work on assessment and qualifications, which will be aligned with the current OECD review, and a comparative paper will be published later in the summer, following the publication of the CFE review report in June 2021.

The Scottish Government had to extend the timetable that is available to carry out the review because of the extra work that the OECD has been asked to undertake. It has also had to acknowledge the constraints under which the OECD is operating due to the effects of the pandemic. Whether that enables the OECD to formulate interim thoughts in advance of the 2021 election is for the OECD to determine.

Throughout the pandemic, the Scottish Government has made education a priority, particularly as we plan the route map out of lockdown. We are grateful to our hard-working, dedicated teaching professionals for their intense work in planning, organising and delivering learning. As parents grapple with teaching their children at home, many of them now appreciate the skills needed to do the job.

The virus will be beaten and schools will return fully to intensify our efforts to achieve excellence and equity for all Scotland's children.

15:01

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): It is very telling that, minus the reference to the pandemic, this debate is one that Opposition parties have had several times in recent years. With that in mind, I remind members of the considerable volume of evidence that the Education and Skills Committee took between 2016 and 2017, through which it became very clear that many teachers had serious issues with the education agencies—principally Education Scotland and the SQA.

That evidence was presented at the same time as John Swinney made it abundantly clear, when responding to a poor inspection report about the education being delivered in one local authority, that when it came to improving standards in Scottish schools,

“the status quo is not an option”.

I whole-heartedly agreed with him then, and if he repeated that now, I would agree with him again.

I agreed with John Swinney then for two reasons. First, standards in our schools were not as good as they should be, which was clearly shown by several of the indices for basic literacy and numeracy. Secondly, too many teachers were telling us that their trust in Education Scotland and the SQA had diminished. That is not a helpful situation at any time, but it was especially unhelpful during the major curriculum reform of CFE, which, incidentally, John Swinney acknowledged was a bit of a “mystery tour”, and it is certainly unhelpful during a pandemic, when the pressures are even greater.

I do not think that, at the time, John Swinney felt that the committee evidence was as balanced as he would have liked it to be. Nonetheless, he promised an education bill, which, at the time, Nicola Sturgeon said would be the

“most radical change to how schools are run”—[*Official Report*, 5 September 2017; c 13.]

since devolution. It was lauded not only as a flagship bill, but as a promise to change the status quo.

I can recall conversations with the cabinet secretary in which he seemed utterly determined to improve standards—I believed him on that—and during which he offered to engage with the education spokesmen in each party about what we would like to see. I have here the submission that I made to him at the time, and it is abundantly clear that one of the recommendations to the Scottish Government was that it should reform the education agencies, starting with the decoupling of the policy and inspectorate roles of Education Scotland, on the basis that it should not be judge and jury.

As we know, the education bill was shelved in June 2018, for the reason that the necessary changes could be made without legislative reform—despite the fact that very little data was available to make that judgment. How Mr Swinney must now rue the ditching of that bill, because it seems highly likely that the current OECD report will reveal some things that the Scottish Government does not like—otherwise, why would the Government hold it back?

The Opposition parties are quite right to challenge the Scottish Government about the delay, given how thorough and helpful the previous OECD report was in highlighting the problems that have to be addressed. This time, it is absolutely essential that there is some meaningful action.

The confusion over the lines of accountability is, of course, at the centre of the whole issue. The Education and Skills Committee highlighted that very strongly in its report in 2017 and recommended that it be addressed without delay. To be fair to the cabinet secretary, he was quick to say at the time that the buck stops with him on education policy. However, the trouble is that teachers on the ground do not see it that way just now. They see continued confusion, obfuscation and a lack of transparency at the heart of Government and education agencies, resulting in on-going mistrust.

I distinctly remember telling John Swinney in 2016 that the problems that schools had encountered were caused not by teachers or by pupils but by civil servants and education agencies, with the result that education had become too much of a political football. No one would like to have been in John Swinney's shoes during the pandemic—he has had an incredibly difficult job—but the pandemic must not be used as an excuse for what is wrong with the governance of Scottish education. There were clear signs of problems many years ago, and nothing has been done to counter them.

15:05

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I ask the cabinet secretary to touch on the point about the OECD report in his concluding remarks and to say why, if he has it, it has not been published.

I think that all members would sign up to the belief that education is the greatest gift that any child could be given in a modern society, and I hope that there is unity in wanting to drive forward and ensure that all children get the best education that they possibly can.

I take on board Mr Swinney's point that he is concerned about the criticism of civil servants and

the national bodies, but the truth is that there have been major question marks about those national bodies and their ability to deliver the education that we want to see in Scotland. For many years, there have been doubts over the curriculum for excellence, the way that it was introduced and the major failings of the national bodies, which have been there for everyone to see. There have also been concerns that, as school budgets have been cut, those national bodies have grown in respect of the numbers of people working in them and their budgets, and that that has not been reflected in the levels of support to teachers and schools. I hope that Mr Swinney will pick up those points. They are genuine concerns.

When schools begin to open up more fully, I ask the Deputy First Minister to listen to teachers, staff in schools and the trade unions. P1 to P3 pupils will start on Monday. I have family members who are teachers, and I know from talking to many teachers that the pressure that teachers have worked under throughout the period of the virus has been immense. I have been told that, when kids went back to school after the first lockdown, there was a marked difference in their behaviour as they coped with new rules on wearing face coverings and so on. The pressures have been massive. As we went back into lockdown, there were pressures on teachers in particular. Many teachers have their own families at home and are therefore trying to support them and other children in the middle of lockdown. If nothing else, those teachers have come through a very difficult period, and they have earned the right to be listened to. They and the teaching unions should be listened to.

Where there are genuine concerns about safety and virus transmission, all efforts must be made to put proper alternatives in place to avoid further interruptions to education and ensure that everyone who works in our schools does so in a safe way.

I appreciate that this is a short debate and I am running out of time. I genuinely believe that everyone in Parliament wants every child to get the best opportunities for a good education. To make that happen, we need to pull together.

Finally, regardless of what is decided today, I believe that, after the election, there will have to be a review of the national bodies and of how we deliver education.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Clare Adamson will be the last speaker in the open debate.

15:10

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I think that it was Mr Greene who said that he felt that these debates have been a bit like

groundhog day during his time in the Parliament and with the education portfolio. As someone who is married to a retired teacher, I have lived through the introduction of 5 to 14, higher still, and curriculum for excellence, each of which was not without controversy, was put under intense scrutiny and grabbed the headlines throughout their time and throughout my time as a councillor and an MSP.

That said, we must remember that, despite the talk of complete failure, we still have a well-performing education system. We have more pupils achieving five or more highers at secondary 5 than ever before, and we have more positive destinations for our young people. Just before Covid hit, the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland highlighted the fact that we have had a huge fall in the number of exclusions in schools. All of that is to be welcomed, and all of it is good.

Covid-19 has had a massive impact on our society, our learning and our teaching, and our school communities are no exception to that. Even a year ago, it would have been impossible to imagine that our schools would have to move to home learning, that the exam diet would be cancelled for two consecutive years or that we would be in a second lockdown. We are only just beginning to understand the extent of the impact on our young people and our school communities.

In all of that, we are all striving. Everyone in this chamber wants excellence and equity for our children and young people. In striving for those things, we know that societal inequalities and individual personal challenges have only been exacerbated by Covid, which has put immense pressure on children, young people and their families and carers.

I am pleased that, after the most recent period of school building closures, the Scottish Government commissioned an equity audit, which was published in January, so that it could better understand the impact on children's learning, health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on disadvantaged students. Since the start of the pandemic, Scottish Government funding has led to an additional 1,400 teachers and over 200 support staff being appointed. New funding can be used to recruit further staff, which might include teachers, classroom assistants, home-school link workers and other support workers, as well as provide resources that families and schools need to support home learning, including additional digital devices where there are any remaining unmet needs for home learning resources. I am incredibly grateful to our hard-working, dedicated teaching professionals for their intense work in planning, organising and delivering learning.

Before Covid, the Scottish Government commissioned the internationally renowned OECD

to undertake an independent review of curriculum for excellence, to help us better understand how the curriculum was being implemented across the country. We should not forget that it is still a relatively new curriculum. Only in the past few years have pupils who are finishing in senior phase been pupils who started primary school under curriculum for excellence. We could not have envisaged the impact that Covid would have not only on all our teaching and learning, but on that commissioned work. Nor could we have predicted the impact of the awarding of the 2020 exam diet, to the extent that it did happen. The Deputy First Minister made it clear that lessons needed to be learned from the awarding in 2020, and swift action was taken.

The Scottish Government also expanded the OECD's remit to include wider issues to do with the broad general education, the senior phase and articulation between the two. However, I remain unconvinced by its observations about disadvantage in subject choice, because, at the end of the day, it is pupils' outcomes that matter. We are seeing more and more pupils going on to modern apprenticeships and to further and higher education.

The Scottish Government has also had to acknowledge the constraints under which the OECD is operating due to the effects of the pandemic. In September—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Adamson, you are over your time. I have to ask you to draw your remarks to a close.

Clare Adamson: I am sorry, Presiding Officer. It is hard to monitor the time when I am at home.

The motion puts the cart before the horse.

15:15

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): I agree with the Deputy First Minister that a huge amount of hard work is being done by a great number of people in the SQA and in Education Scotland, and I have no doubt that much of that work has been useful. However, the two key, central points that are entirely inescapable in the debate have been set out by Ross Greer and Liz Smith. The issues with those institutions are not new and they are not confined to the pandemic; they are long-standing issues that have been revisited by the Parliament on a number of occasions. Frankly, we are reaching the limit of having these debates and no action being taken.

The second key issue is the pattern of outcomes and results that are directly caused by those institutions, which cannot be supported. That issue was well set out by Jamie Greene and Willie Rennie. We cannot ignore the pattern of what has

happened with the implementation of curriculum for excellence over the past 10 years, starting with the 20,000 pages of guidance that Willie Rennie pointed to, which led to huge confusion among the teaching profession and undoubtedly hampered its roll-out.

We need to talk plainly, because curriculum for excellence has been bedevilled by those on-going issues, and, although many of them have been resolved, there are still lingering issues. Curriculum for excellence was meant to be a broad change in approach, linking across disciplines, but we have seen a fudging of disciplines and boundaries and a lack of clarity. Too much emphasis has been placed on the requirement for teachers to construct a curriculum for themselves, and there is an overarching tick-box approach rather than the broader change in doctrine that was supposed to be ushered in by curriculum for excellence.

Nor can we ignore the issues that have come up with examinations. We know about the problems with multilevel teaching. We also know about the issues that are associated with the introduction of national 5s and the significant changes that had to be made as a result of them.

The truth is that, when we dig into those issues, the problems with the institutions become very clear indeed. At the beginning of the current parliamentary session, when the Education and Skills Committee looked at many of the issues, neither Education Scotland nor the SQA could point to who had made the decisions about the deliverability of those examinations. That lack of transparency and clarity about who is responsible is a theme that we have seen throughout our examination of the issues.

If we look at the more recent problems with the algorithm, we continue to see a lack of transparency from the SQA. It fundamentally changed the methodology, removing the final link of going back to schools to check results, and it never published the algorithm. That is not an approach that we can tolerate in our education system; we need transparency. We need institutions that have the trust of the education system, of teachers and of parents. Quite simply, those institutions have lost that trust, and we cannot allow that state of affairs to carry on any longer.

We hoped that the OECD report would provide answers, but we will not know what those answers are before the election. The election is supposed to be an opportunity for the electorate to make informed decisions, yet in education—the most important subject area that the Parliament will look at, according to the First Minister—the electorate will not be able to make an informed decision, because the OECD report will not be published

despite the fact that it will be sitting on ministers' desks.

For those reasons, we cannot support the Government's amendment and we must support the Liberal Democrat motion. We need to reform the education system, the SQA and Education Scotland.

15:19

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):

Today's debate has pretty much summed up 14 years of SNP education policy failure. Not only is the Government wasting time and energy on plotting to hold an illegal referendum before Christmas this year, but any spare energy that it has left is being expended on hiding the truth at all costs. Let us make no mistake: if the Government had got a glowing report from the OECD, we would be having a debate on it in the chamber and, at the very least, it would have been leaked to the press. Instead, the report sits on the cabinet secretary's desk, buried under all the other damning documents that the Parliament has demanded be published.

The claim that education is the Government's number 1 priority is laughable and no longer holds any credibility. At the heart of the problem is the cabinet secretary, who has failed to get a grip of any of the key issues and has, at every turn, simply opted for the path of least resistance instead of demanding the change that is badly needed to restore our once world-leading education system.

It has not escaped my attention that many members who have served in Parliament for a long time recognise the repeated failures and a continued choice on the part of the cabinet secretary to push the issues further and further down the road. All the while, our young people are being let down.

We have all the essential ingredients of a world-leading system: a dedicated workforce, committed young people, parents and carers, and a will in the Parliament to work together. We have seen that once again during the pandemic, when many schools and individual teachers have gone above and beyond in exceptionally difficult circumstances. The only thing missing in all of that is the SNP. I have lost count of how many times the Government has lost votes on education, with the rest of the Parliament, despite our political differences, uniting to call for action.

No one who has sat on the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee or followed its proceedings can have any confidence in Education Scotland or the SQA. There seems to be a kind of pact in place whereby they will let the Scottish Government off the hook when it comes

to substandard outcomes in return for a free pass to mark their own homework and excuse away their role in events.

Over the past five years, I have visited almost every school in my constituency, with only the pandemic preventing me from completing the list. In every school, I have seen the problem of teachers and young people coming up against a system that speaks in soundbites and buzzwords, that thinks that it knows better and that, ultimately, does not seem to grasp the challenges on the ground.

As many members have pointed out, there is confusion about the lines of accountability and about who is making some of the key decisions and judgment calls. I am personally alarmed at the continued failings when it comes to ASN provision. It is progress that the cabinet secretary now seems to recognise that there is a gap between the rhetoric and reality, but, as every person at the coalface knows, that has been the case for years and nothing has been done.

Right across the education system, the very organisations that exist to raise standards and ensure equity and excellence are so detached from reality that it is hard to see how they can ever do their job effectively. I believe that that is why teachers have lost faith in those key organisations, as my colleague Liz Smith and others have pointed out. We just cannot accept that.

That is why, if we are serious about getting things right for our young people, we cannot let the matter slip into the next session of Parliament. We must own the issues and face them head on. Rather than being a convenient excuse to hit the pause button, the pandemic is a call to action that has highlighted the weakness at the centre of the system, and we need to do something about it. The cabinet secretary needs to do something about it. It is not enough just to wish the problems away.

15:23

John Swinney: One of the points that Daniel Johnson made does not stand up to any scrutiny whatsoever. Mr Johnson acknowledged that public servants had done a great deal of work in supporting the delivery of education during remote learning in the agencies—Education Scotland and the SQA—that are the subject of criticism in Willie Rennie's motion. However, Mr Johnson has indicated that he intends to vote for the motion. It leaves a bad taste for people who have worked hard to support the education system, as teachers and local authority officials have done around the country, to be given a kick in the teeth by Parliament this afternoon.

Willie Rennie: It is a characteristic of the Government that, whenever ministers are under attack, they always use public servants to defend their policy failures. This is another example of that. We in no way criticise individuals; we criticise the organisation, and the minister should accept that.

John Swinney: That is the pathetic kind of behaviour that we get from Mr Rennie and his colleague Mr Cole-Hamilton on a regular basis. We have public servants in those organisations who have worked very hard during the pandemic, and the first part of Mr Rennie's motion sticks the boot into those public servants. I will not associate the Government with that type of shabby behaviour—and the Liberal Democrats know all about shabby behaviour this week, if I may say so. *[Interruption.]* I will not take another intervention—I have to close the debate.

On some of the substantive choices, Mr Rowley put some fair points to me about the funding for school education. I have boosted school education funding by sending money directly to schools for five years in pupil equity funding, giving headteachers control over the budgets at their disposal. Mr Rowley then attacks me for funding the national agencies. If I had not funded the national agencies, there would not be a digital network in place that allows every single school pupil in Scotland to have a digital account that enables them to access remote learning. That is what investment in the national agencies has brought.

Mr Gray laid into the SQA for all the preparations for the assessment in 2021. One of the recommendations of the Priestley review was that the SQA should bring together a stakeholder group in the education system involving professional associations, Colleges Scotland and directors of education, working with the SQA. It is called the national qualifications 2021 group, and the members of that group are the authors of the guidance that is available to the education system. The SQA has not gone off into some ivory tower to make up that guidance itself; it has been working, as the Priestley recommendations said that it should, with the wider education system.

I put those two points on the record to indicate that some of this debate has been, frankly, gratuitous.

Clare Adamson hit the nail on the head. So did Oliver Mundell, if I may say so, if I can get through the persistent personal attacks that Mr Mundell makes on me in parliamentary debates—that is part of his character in Parliament now. As I worked my way through all that, Clare Adamson and Mr Mundell made exactly the right points, asking what effect on outcomes there has been as a consequence of the SNP Government. The

effect has been that more young people have been getting better qualifications over the 14 years of this Government. Mr Mundell shakes his head, but I suggest that he goes away and—

Oliver Mundell: Will Mr Swinney give way?

John Swinney: I certainly will.

Oliver Mundell: I cannot believe that Mr Swinney can look young people from deprived communities in the eye and tell them that, under his Government, they have had a fair crack of the whip. I do not believe that. Hiding behind selectively quoted statistics just does not cut it.

John Swinney: I suggest that Mr Mundell acquaints himself with some of the statistics. On attainment of five highers, attainment of one higher from areas of deprivation and positive destinations achieved, young people are doing better today than they did when this Government came to office. That is the record that I will take to the streets of this country on 6 May, and I look forward to Mr Mundell and his colleagues getting the hammering that they deserve on that occasion.

15:28

Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD): There is a lot to be proud of in Scottish education. It has been alarming to see what teachers and learners have had to endure during the pandemic, and let us not forget the challenges for parents and family life. It has also been inspiring to see what teachers and learners have achieved. Iain Gray rightly referred to their “heroic” efforts. To say that teachers have stepped up does not do it justice. For many of them, going “above and beyond”, as Oliver Mundell put it, was a habit that they were already accustomed to. Whatever the ask and whatever the call, teachers have worked flat out to give pupils the best education possible.

In that light, the failing national educational infrastructure has become all the more clear. When they were needed most, both of the education secretary’s quangos left teachers, pupils and parents in the lurch.

Without question, children and young people should be at the top of the priority list, yet, minutes after the publication of last year’s exam results, the Scottish Government’s own documents established that pupils from poorer areas were penalised the most. The week before, the SQA told the education secretary about those outcomes. No minutes were taken at the meeting, but we know how it ended. There was no counterbalance or challenge. Somehow, results that actively and unfairly downgraded pupils based simply on the school that they went to were agreed to as acceptable. That was a critical meeting—a chance to pull the plug—but the SQA

pressed publish. It is hard to think about the distress that pupils, parents and teachers experienced as a result. Incredibly, on reflection, the SQA seemed to think that, in fact, its was a job well done, because it had completed the ministerial brief and delivered what the education secretary asked for.

In the short review that followed, Professor Mark Priestley found a perception that the organisation was

“remote”

and

“resistant to working with stakeholders.”

He also found that

“There has been an erosion of trust/confidence in SQA amongst teachers and young people”.

I asked Professor Priestley whether he thought that fulfilling the ministerial brief was the SQA’s primary aim, and he answered yes. There is no doubt that the SQA would prefer to appease ministers and keep the cosy arrangement going than serve the interests of Scotland’s learners.

Ross Greer and Liz Smith referred to previous parliamentary debates, evidence that was taken by the Education and Skills Committee in 2016-17 and the concerns at that time about agency accountability. Education Scotland has been missing throughout, and Scottish Liberal Democrats have long been concerned about its ability to do the job that it has been set. There is a fundamental conflict of interest at its heart. Education Scotland sets the Scottish Government’s education policy at the same time as holding it accountable. We are not the only ones who do not trust what is going on. Only 28 per cent of Education Scotland’s employees said that they have confidence in its leadership. Scottish Liberal Democrat research has revealed that Education Scotland has ministerial approval to meddle with the report that is supposed to guide improvement and change.

These agencies have been remote and unaccountable for too long. That must change. As Daniel Johnson said, there must be transparency in the system. Scotland’s children and young people deserve better. They deserve the highest possible standard of education so that they can all reach their full potential.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on education.

Mental Health

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Lewis Macdonald): The next item of business is a Liberal Democrat debate on motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health. I ask members who wish to contribute to the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons now.

15:33

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): As he leaves the chamber, I say to the Deputy First Minister that he undermines the Government position with such personal and shabby attacks during a serious debate. I hope that the Government will reflect on its tone.

The Liberal Democrats have brought this motion to the chamber—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, please.

The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd): Will the member take an intervention?

Alex Cole-Hamilton: I will not right now, thank you.

The Liberal Democrats have brought the motion to the chamber because, quite simply, there is a mental health crisis in Scotland. I believe that that has been clear for some time, but the coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc and devastation not only on physical health, but on emotional health. Societal bereavement, cabin fever and anxiety around personal prosperity have all taken their toll, but isolation is one of the worst contributing factors to poor mental health, and our communities have had that in spades. The 19th century French novelist Honoré de Balzac said:

“Solitude is fine but you need somebody to tell you that solitude is fine.”

Fifteen months ago, when the Liberal Democrats led a debate on the mental health crisis, the statistics were shocking, and the stories stark. I am sure that I was not alone in being profoundly moved by the personal testimonies of members and the situations that their constituents faced. However, I am also deeply concerned because 15 months ago the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing told the Parliament:

“Mental health is a priority for the Government. It is not a short-term priority and it is not a here today, gone tomorrow political issue.” —*[Official Report, 27 November 2019; c 21.]*

The Minister for Mental Health (Clare Haughey): I thank Alex Cole-Hamilton for taking my intervention, although he would not take Ms Todd’s.

I take it that the member will welcome the announcement that was made yesterday by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance about the additional £120 million going to mental health.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: I certainly will. Every additional pound that is spent on mental health is welcome, but every extra pound that the Government spends on an unwanted independence referendum is a yet another pound that is not spent on it.

The Government refuses to acknowledge that Scotland faces a mental health crisis: its amendment does so again today. It is not rocket science to work out that for a problem to be solved, it must first be acknowledged. That was why this Parliament declared a climate emergency. We must now declare a mental health emergency to drive change, to ramp up services and to improve intervention and prevention.

The changes that I want could have been set out in my motion. There should be local, direct and fast access to help wherever and whenever someone needs it. The mental health workforce should be expanded. There should be no more long journeys for those who seek treatment. All the good things that I want are made harder if we cannot get over the first hurdle, which is to agree that there is a crisis.

The situation in our schools was urgent 15 months ago. The number of days that have been lost to mental ill health by teachers and school support staff has risen from more than 140,000 in 2017-18 to more than 180,000 in 2019-20. The children and young people whom they teach are meant to be supported by a guarantee that they will be treated within 18 weeks. That is a long time for anyone who faces mental ill health, such as an eating disorder, post-traumatic stress or suicidal thoughts. However, even that target is not met in two out of five cases. That was true before the pandemic and it is true now. There has also been no change in the record number of children waiting for more than a year for treatment.

As I have said many times, if one’s daughter fell off her bike and broke her arm, one could reasonably expect her to be in plaster by the end of the day. As it is, if she came with profound anxiety and self-harming behaviour she would join the longest queue in the national health service.

Staff are working hard round the clock, but they have never had the resources or support that they need to meet the considerable demand that they face. We know that in-patient care is struggling. I have raised many times the case of David Ramsay, who took his own life after being turned away from Carseview in Tayside. His niece Gilly messaged me today to say that that kind of thing is still happening, and with tragic consequences.

I do not doubt the Scottish Government's concern for the mental health of people across the country, but we must acknowledge that there is a crisis, if the response is to match its scale. Liberal Democrats have determinedly pressed the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to improve funding for mental health services. Extra resources are welcome and are a good start to the Government taking a better approach to mental health, but if Parliament agrees to our motion to declare that Scotland faces a mental health emergency, we must go further.

I will end by echoing the sentiments of the First Minister, which is not something that I do often. When answering questions from a panel of young people in 2019, the First Minister said:

“On mental health, we still don't do enough ... and we don't do it well enough.”

She certainly was not wrong.

We understand a crisis to be

“a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events is determined.”

We were in a mental health crisis 14 or 15 months ago: we have been in it for a long time and the Government has failed to act. I appeal to the Government not to make the same mistake this time.

The debate is an opportunity for members of all parties to come together and acknowledge the situation in Scotland's mental health for what it is: a crisis. In doing so, we can help to ensure that the Government and other public agencies work together to take meaningful action on the scale that is necessary for, and equal to, the challenge of the crisis.

I move,

That the Parliament recalls its resolution on the debate on motion S5M-20035 on mental health on 27 November 2019, and now recognises that there is a mental health crisis in Scotland.

15:38

The Minister for Mental Health (Clare Haughey): This is a critically important topic that unites all members. The mental health impacts of the pandemic have brought new and significant challenges across Scotland. We have been through several stages of lockdown, restrictions and recovery. Each of those phases has had a widespread impact on the mental health and wellbeing of people across the country. The experience has been psychologically draining for many of us, and the importance of mental wellbeing has been all too clear.

We know that the mental health impacts will continue to be wide ranging. This is an on-going

struggle, and we should remember that it is a time of national trauma. Some impacts will be long term, and others will be exacerbated by underlying inequalities in society and, especially, by pre-existing mental health conditions.

Yes—this is a time of collective trauma. That is, sadly, inevitable during a global pandemic. How we respond is crucial, so I have lodged an amendment that focuses on a proactive and comprehensive response, rather than simply describing the issues.

Mental health is, and will continue to be, an absolute priority for the Government. Ahead of the debate, I reviewed the motion on mental health, as amended, to which the Parliament agreed in 2019. It referred to “parity of esteem”, the ability of services to respond to increased demand, the creation of new supports and the dedication of staff who work tirelessly every day to help those in need. All those things remain paramount in our Covid response.

Yesterday's budget announcements by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance should—I hope that they will—leave nobody in any doubt about the priority that we attach to mental health, or about our commitment to providing the right help in the right place at the right time. The £120 million that we announced for our mental health recovery and renewal fund is the single largest investment in mental health in the history of devolution. That is in addition to the £142.1 million that we had already allocated to mental health in the 2021-22 budget. That total of £262.1 million for mental health in the coming financial year means that we have more than doubled the mental health budget for 2021-22 from that in 2020.

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): I will not make a speech in the debate, but I have a question. The money is welcome. We could have some argy-bargy over its source, but what I want to know is whether it will get to the right place. Will the third sector and grass-roots charitable organisations on the ground be seeing any of that cash, and will a plan be presented for where it is going?

Clare Haughey: We certainly value the work of the third sector, and we work closely and engage with those organisations at Government and ministerial levels. If Jamie Greene acquaints himself with our plan, “Mental Health—Scotland's Transition and Recovery”, he will see exactly where we are going with mental health services across the piece—from challenging stigma through to our specialist in-patient services.

The funding that I have described takes our total spend on mental health in 2021-22 to in excess of £1.2 billion. The recovery and renewal fund will ensure delivery of the mental health transition and

recovery plan, and will prioritise our on-going work to improve specialist child and adolescent mental health services, address long waiting times and clear waiting-list backlogs.

Nearly £10 million will be allocated to clearing backlogs in psychological therapy waiting lists for adults, and we will provide significant additional support for mental health in primary care settings. We recognise the need to focus on supporting people at the earliest possible stage, so we will invest in enhanced community supports. That £120 million fund builds on the £20 million of dedicated funding that we had already announced over the course of the pandemic.

We have expanded the NHS 24 mental health hub so that it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We have also increased the capacity of the Breathing Space telephone helpline and web support service. We have created extra capacity for computerised cognitive behavioural therapy, and our distress brief intervention programme has been rolled out nationally to provide rapid, accessible and focused one-to-one support for people who are in distress.

We have also invested in supporting children and young people by providing funding to local authorities to support the mental wellbeing of five to 24-year-olds in our communities, and to address the impact of the pandemic on children and young people.

In addition, our transition and recovery plan lays out more than 100 actions that are designed to support mental health needs across Scotland. The plan sets out our commitment to supporting the whole population's mental wellbeing and summarises our work to address the impact of the pandemic on specific population groups. That includes children and young people, people with long-term physical conditions and disabilities, and those who are experiencing suicidal ideation, among many other types of need.

We need to remember that there is hope, and that there will be recovery. The success of the vaccination programme and, in time, the easing of restrictions, will play a significant part in that.

The Government will continue to work tirelessly to invest in the right mental health support and to target that help where it is needed most. Yes—this is the most challenging period that many of us will ever face in terms of our mental health and wellbeing. It has been traumatic and some people are really struggling, and our focus is on helping them to get through it.

I move amendment S5M-24138.3, to leave out from “, and now recognises” to end and insert:

“; further recalls that the motion as passed agreed that mental health and physical health must be treated with parity of esteem, welcomed additional investment in

services, and that the mental wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable people in society has been negatively impacted by a series of welfare cuts by the UK Government, starting with the Welfare Reform Act 2012; believes that the Scottish Parliament must advocate solutions; recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic is taking a significant toll on the mental wellbeing of people across the country, and that recovery of NHS services must ensure that mental health has the same priority as physical health; welcomes that, in addition to the plans in the draft Budget for 2021-22, a further £120 million will be allocated for a Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund, which would take total planned spend on mental health in 2021-22 to in excess of £1.2 billion, and notes that the additional funding will help deliver the mental health recovery plan, including a headline focus to improve specialist CAMHS services and address long waits, supporting mental health in primary care settings, as well as nearly £10 million to speed up treatment for adults waiting for psychological therapies.”

15:44

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands)

(Con): I agree with Alex Cole-Hamilton and others that we face a mental health crisis in Scotland. We faced that crisis before the pandemic, with exceptionally long waiting lists for mental health support and therapy, and chronic workforce pressures. Most tragically of all, recorded suicides have increased year on year since 2017, despite the promise that was made by the Scottish Government in its 2018 “Scotland’s Suicide Prevention Action Plan” to reduce suicides by a fifth by 2022.

Then we come to Covid-19. We are just one month away from the one-year milestone from when the whole country went into its first lockdown. We now know more about Covid-19 as a virus, but we also know more about its impact on society. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has highlighted data that shows that

“high levels of psychological distress ... have doubled during the Covid-19 pandemic”.

The impact of the pandemic is being felt far and wide. Inclusion Scotland stated that its research

“throughout the periods of lockdown uncovered a mental health emergency for disabled people in Scotland who told us in no uncertain terms that they were being ‘pushed to the brink’.”

Covid-19 has tested everyone, but there are many people for whom it has just been too much to cope with. Although there is light on the horizon with vaccines being rolled out, cases and infections falling and the prospect of a slow return to some normality, we know that this event will have lasting effects on many people in our society.

It is right to note that in November 2019 we debated this same issue and the Scottish National Party Government appeared to be in a state of denial about the extent of the crisis that we face. Fast forward to today and the crisis has been exacerbated, with waiting lists stretched and

people waiting months for treatment. It is completely unacceptable for the SNP to blame the United Kingdom Government for that, as it does in its amendment today, in a blatant attempt to shift the blame for where we now are.

The crisis has been long in the making and the Scottish Government has been in power for 14 years—the crisis is its responsibility and its alone. The fact is that the Government has taken its eye completely off the ball; we can see how that has impacted on mental health services across Scotland. Inclusion Scotland has highlighted that for the quarter ending September 2020, just 60 per cent of children and young people were seen within 18 weeks, as opposed to the 90 per cent that should have been seen as per Government targets. That is six in 10, when it should be nine in 10.

According to the latest child and adolescent mental health services data, almost 1,000 children and young people have waited more than a year to begin vital treatment, and of the near 23,600 patients who were waiting for mental health treatment in September 2020, around 3,800 had been waiting more than a year.

All those figures paint a picture of vulnerable people waiting to receive vital treatment and services that are completely unable to cope with demand. That not surprising, given that there have been warnings about workforce pressures for many years. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has said that nearly one in 10 consultant psychiatry posts was vacant in its last census in 2019, which was a year-on-year increase of nearly a third, and there is a one in six consultant vacancy rate in CAMHS.

Before the pandemic, the Government pledged to recruit 800 mental health workers by April 2021, but we know that as at July 2020—the most recent figures available—it had fallen far short of that target. It is clear that we need to invest drastically in our mental health workforce in order to clear the growing backlog of patients who are waiting. Only then will we be able to deliver a mental health service that meets the needs of the people of Scotland, especially our young people.

The Scottish Government is still failing to recognise the challenges that we face on mental health, and the Covid-19 pandemic has heightened many of those challenges. We need a Government that will focus on tackling the mental health crisis head-on, rather than burying its head in the sand. We support the motion today and encourage others to support our amendment.

I move amendment S5M-24138.2, to insert at end:

“; notes with concern the potential for an unsustainable increase in demand for CAMHS and other mental health

services, many of which already experience unacceptably long waiting times; recognises the need for both improved access to NHS mental health services and greater support for third sector organisations to reduce waiting times and deliver urgently needed care; considers that maintaining good mental health is as important as maintaining good physical health, and believes that further efforts are required to promote self-care for mental health.”

15:49

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): I begin in the same way that I began the debate that is referenced in the motion—by thanking the Liberal Democrats for bringing the debate. I also indicate our support for the Liberal Democrat motion and the Conservative amendment.

I appreciate every opportunity to discuss mental health because doing so helps us better understand and enhance the mental health of our country. A lot has taken place since the previous debate on mental health. If we agreed—as we did—that there was a mental health crisis in November 2019, we can be assured that the crisis is far worse today. It could be said that we are nearing the point of a mental health emergency.

The impact of the pandemic has left no aspect of our daily lives unaffected and the full scale of the impact on mental health has not yet been fully realised. However, the official statistics released in the past year give us great cause for concern. Children and young people are missing out on and waiting longer to access CAMHS; there is increasing loneliness; more people are tragically dying by suicide; and more people are revealing that they have had suicidal thoughts, particularly between each wave of the pandemic.

A survey by the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland reveals that one in four people think that the pandemic will have a negative impact on their mental health over the next year and 33 per cent of people with an existing mental health condition say that it has worsened since March 2020.

Two and a half years since the review into rejected CAMHS referrals, there has been a disappointing lack of meaningful reform and action in CAMHS. There are far too many young people waiting too long for access to CAMHS. The latest publication of CAMHS waiting times for the quarter ending September 2020 shows that four out of 10 children and young people were waiting longer than the 18-week target. That is a rise in the missed target compared with the previous quarter and the same quarter in 2019.

Scottish Labour wants to see an effective strategy that ensures that young people do not face unnecessary long waits and barriers to their transition to adult services. For far too long, young people have fallen behind as they move to adult services, putting at risk their long-term wellbeing.

That issue, which is raised time and time again, is part of the focus of our amendment.

In the November 2019 debate, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport recognised the need for transformational change. If there is to be transformational change—and there surely must be—in how we deliver mental health services and in creating parity between physical and mental health, now is the time to be serious about that and to rebuild mental health services to enable us to deal with this pandemic and future pandemics and crises.

However, that requires political will and capital. It is regrettable that recent budgets laid out by the Government and passed by this Parliament have failed to increase funding for mental health services in line with increases in overall health funding. When cabinet secretaries call for parity between physical and mental health, their actions do not match their rhetoric. We need action, and we need it now.

I move amendment S5M-24138.1, to insert at end:

“; notes with deep concern the further increase in the number of deaths by suicide in 2019 and the reported increase in suicidal thoughts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; considers the continued excessive waits for access to CAMHS and high proportion of young people who still have their referral rejected to be unacceptable; is disappointed at the failure to implement an effective transitions strategy to support patients moving between services; acknowledges that mental health services cannot tackle the crisis without increased resources, and therefore believes it is regrettable that, in recent Scottish Budgets, funding for mental health services has failed to keep up with rises in overall health funding.”

15:53

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): My thoughts are with all those who are affected by mental ill health and suicide, and I extend my sincere thanks to those who are working so hard in front-line services to help people experiencing mental distress. I, too, thank the Lib Dems for bringing the debate to the chamber this afternoon.

It is fair to say that we all acknowledge that the mental health of people of all ages across Scotland has been impacted by the pandemic. It has been a particularly distressing time for young people, who have been at risk of isolation and loneliness while being separated from their peers during lockdowns. A survey conducted by YoungMinds last summer found that

“80% of respondents agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse.”

Meanwhile, it has become even more difficult for them to access mental health support, as Covid-19 led to a 55 per cent reduction in referrals to CAMHS.

However, we know that mental health provision for young people was poor even prior to the pandemic, because rejected referrals to CAMHS meant that too many were being left without treatment for too long. We must urgently improve CAMHS provision by delivering the resources and workforce that such services need, but we must also ensure that our young people are supported in the community while they await referral.

Local general practitioners' surgeries will, of course, play an important role in addressing the current mental health crisis. GPs will be on the front line in any surge in mental health cases, as they are often our first port of call when we are unwell. The number of mental health clinicians who work in local surgeries must be bolstered to cope with such demand and to ensure that patients can access mental health support when they need it.

All too often, GPs are faced with either referring patients to specialist mental health support, knowing that a long waiting list or a rejected referral awaits them, or leaving them with no support at all. Community link workers can help to direct patients to support in the community, but they are often hampered by a lack of awareness of what provision is available and by the precarious nature of funding for voluntary and community organisations. The Government must undertake a mapping exercise so that we know what levels of community resources are available and can address any gaps in provision.

The Scottish Association for Mental Health is calling for an expanded network of psychological wellbeing supports, based within the third and voluntary sectors, which can be accessed quickly through self-referral, community-based triage or GP referral. I urge the cabinet secretary to give that proposal serious consideration.

The financial impact of Covid has also affected mental health services. In the debate referred to in Alex Cole-Hamilton's motion, I spoke about the impact of the UK Government's welfare reform on mental health. The minister was right also to refer to it in her amendment. The pandemic has highlighted the link between financial instability and poor mental health. The Mental Health Foundation says that

“groups affected by socioeconomic inequalities have been more likely to experience anxiety, panic, hopelessness, loneliness, and to report not coping well with the stress of the pandemic.”

Low income, unmanageable debt, unemployment, poor housing conditions and other socioeconomic factors all contribute to high suicide rates. We know that living in poverty takes a terrible toll on mental and physical wellbeing, so any preventative approach must address the link between mental health, inequality and poverty. If

we fail to tackle the root causes of poor mental health, the challenge faced by mental health services will be insurmountable.

We must also recognise that not everyone has been equally affected by the pandemic. We need to improve our understanding of how people from ethnic minorities in Scotland have been affected by Covid if we are to avoid further worsening of existing health inequalities, including mental health ones, and to address the disproportionate impact of Covid on our black and minority ethnic communities.

We need to future proof our services and ensure that long-term workforce planning is taking place. Mental health services were overburdened and understaffed before the pandemic. The Parliament was debating waiting times and rejected referrals long before we had heard of Covid-19. We must act now to ensure that our mental health services can continue to support us now and for generations to come.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): We move to the open debate. We are already over time so please be very tight with speeches, which should last no longer than four minutes.

15:58

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I am pleased to speak in the debate. Notwithstanding the challenges and criticisms that have been made by some members who have spoken, positive actions have also taken place. Just as the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland has done, it is important that we recognise what has been achieved.

In 2017, the Scottish Government's new 10-year mental health strategy was published. Crucially, its aim was to create parity between the treatment of physical and mental health services. The Scottish Government has also increased funding for mental health services. As we heard, only yesterday it announced another £120 million for the mental health budget line, in addition to what was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance only a few weeks ago. The provision of £120 million for a mental health recovery and renewal fund will take next year's Scottish mental health funding to £1.2 billion, which will be hugely beneficial for every community in Scotland. No previous Government has ever invested that level of resource in mental health services.

I welcome that additional resource and hope that in my Greenock and Inverclyde constituency the £120 million of funding can be made available to third sector organisations in addition to public sector bodies. Safe Harbour and Mind Mosaic are just two of the organisations that the minister has

previously met and has an appreciation for. Barnardo's and SAMH also undertake important work to help my constituents. I appreciate that the third sector is very much considered in the mental health transition and recovery plan.

The specialist work that Safe Harbour and Mind Mosaic undertake to help my constituents has a hugely positive effect and helps people to get their lives back. I know that the work that they deliver is appreciated by many, many people. Just as with addiction services, third sector organisations do a vast amount on mental health. They also have the opportunity to spend more time with individuals—time that public bodies do not always have.

The second point to highlight is that, at decision time on 27 November 2019, the Scottish Government's amendment to the motion on mental health passed by 66 votes to 38. It replaced the words "mental health crisis" with the following:

"mental health and physical health must be treated with parity of esteem; further recognises that there is increased demand for mental health services as stigma has thankfully diminished".—[*Official Report*, 27 November 2019; c 80.]

The Parliament voted to make the changes needed to make mental health equal to physical health. Society has changed. People not only want change; they quite rightly demand it.

It is also important to highlight that in the November 2019 publication of the annual report into the mental health strategy, two key aspects were highlighted. First, it highlighted that progress towards the actions in the mental health strategy was happening; 19 out of 40 actions were either complete or soon to be complete. Secondly, the Scottish Government responded positively to 99 out of 103 recommendations from the Youth Commission on Mental Health Services.

If the Scottish Government did not have a mental health strategy, I could accept the Opposition taking it to task; I would be doing the same. However, the strategy was prepared and published, it is being rolled out and it will prove to be beneficial for many people in our country.

I will finish by commending Amy Shearer of the *Greenock Telegraph*. Amy is a reporter and she was the genesis behind the recent time to talk day that the newspaper ran in print and online. The purpose was simple: it was to help break the stigma around mental ill health. Amy's story of being bullied in school was awful, but I thank her for having the bravery to talk about it. Members can check the *Greenock Telegraph* Twitter feed for the short videos that were also posted.

The fact that Amy needed to tell that story tells us that there is still a vast amount of work to do. With societal change and political change, I believe that we can make leaps forward in helping

to deal with the mental health problems that many people in our constituencies have. We still need to deal with the stigma, but that issue is being addressed, bit by bit.

16:02

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands)

(Con): The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges to the world and, in some cases, it has shone a light on the existing issues, including the mental health issues that are prevalent in Scotland. Rises in loneliness, anxiety, depression or suicidal feelings are common. Our mental health has never been more challenged than it is now, and, frankly, our systems are struggling to cope.

The facts speak for themselves. One in five children referred to specialist mental health services are being turned away; a quarter of those referred for psychological therapies wait at least four months to be seen; and deaths by suicide have risen over the past two years. I suspect that those are just the tip of the iceberg.

In NHS Highland, our mental health professionals are doing everything that they can to help those in need, but they are not being helped by the SNP Government or by their own health board. In the past four years, mental health provision has been downgraded. New Craigs hospital in Inverness has seen a reduction in beds and staff, and it has not been immune from the devastating impact of staff bullying, which has taken its toll on our mental health professionals, too.

New Craigs now has just two recovery teams and can only hope to help people when they reach a crisis. For some, that help comes too late. Help needs to come far sooner—more lives will be lost if we continue with a mental health system that only helps when people hit breaking point. At a time when highlanders need more and more help from mental health services, the Government is giving them less and less. The consequences of years of underfunding and underresourcing our mental health teams are stark.

In Caithness and Sutherland, we have reached a situation of increased reliance on the police to be the first line of defence in the community in helping those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts. Officers will see it as their duty to step in and help, but that is not their primary job and they are not trained to do it. Our young officers are being exposed to incredible stresses, some of which they cannot cope with.

We have a mental health crisis in the Highlands, and our mental health system is clearly not fit for purpose. The model is broken and needs to change urgently. First, we need mental health

professionals to be embedded in our GP practices. Secondly, we need more collaboration between NHS Highland and mental health charities and support groups. The likes of James Support Group and Mikeysline, which are charities that do much to help highlanders who are impacted by mental health issues, must be part of the solution.

More needs to be done to raise public awareness of what support is available. How many people who need support know where and how to access it? The process must be made easier. We need to introduce effective online portals for mental health support so that people can be signposted to appropriate services and help groups in their area. That information should be handed over the first time that a patient presents themselves to their GP.

As lockdown restrictions are relaxed, we need in-person sessions to return. The reassuring physical presence of a therapist or members of a support group is vital to improving mental health. Video calls will always be a poor substitute.

The Highlands need a Scottish Government that is fully focused on improving mental health services. The Government that we have had for the past 14 years has not had such a focus; it is time for a Government that has.

16:06

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I have recently taken a strong interest in young people's mental health services. In a previous debate, I spoke about what the system needs to do to adapt.

Changes to the system should be considered. I am a relative newcomer to the such debates, but I will give my observations. I spoke previously about my constituent's poor experience in Glasgow after a suicide attempt. It took several complaints to get her to the right place. Six months on, she still does not have access to a consultant psychiatrist, which she desperately needs. Waiting times are a major feature of the system that needs to be addressed.

Another constituent who I contacted today to find out how she is doing said that she is contacted quite regularly to find out whether she still wants to see a consultant psychiatrist. She said that nothing has changed.

I whole-heartedly welcome the additional funding for mental health services, but I make the plea that the debate is not simply about funding—we need to scrutinise waiting times, the availability of the right treatment, the diversity of treatment and the pathways to the right support. We know that individuals can be permanently damaged if they fail to get the right treatment.

As SAMH has previously suggested, CAMHS should be extended to people up to the age of 25, and I have always agreed with that. We should plan for that now. For young people, the jump from leaving the children's service at 18, when between then and the age of 24 or 25 will be the most important period of their life, is a major design feature that needs to be addressed urgently.

Waiting lists are long, and 1,000 young people are waiting on the CAMHS register. For reasons that I do not fully understand, 20 per cent of applications for treatment are rejected.

I agree with Mary Fee and others that we are in the middle of a mental health crisis. Young people in different stages of their lives are suffering in different ways. The lockdown has been tough on young people not just because they are learning from home but because their social development is being affected.

I asked my 12-year-old niece, Maia, what question I should ask the First Minister after yesterday's statement. Maia said that she would like me to ask the First Minister why she cannot see her friends, which is probably what most children would say in the pandemic.

The crisis was brewing before we got here. That is clear from the Scottish Government's latest wellbeing statistics, which show that 38 per cent of young people reported that they had very poor mental health before the pandemic.

One in six children are now thought to have a mental health problem. Not being in school and lacking contact with friends are damaging children and particularly the poorest children. That is why I am inclined to support a national approach to education in the lockdown. Many children are being left behind because the system is not catching up with them.

We do not know what the real impact of the pandemic will be. Some people might bounce back in time, while others will not. It is important that our mental health system is fit for purpose and able to identify the differences that exist so that, in time, people will be able to get back to their normal lives and to think in the way that they would want to think once we get back to normality, as we hope that we will do towards the end of the year.

Our mental health service must be fit for purpose, but we must ensure that, with the additional funding, we are heading in the right direction, reducing the waiting times and ensuring that the right treatment is provided at the right time. If we do that, we will have done a service to young people in this country.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The final contribution in the open debate comes from Emma Harper.

16:10

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. The year 2020 was consumed by the pandemic, which has affected everyone and changed all aspects of our lives. It has caused much stress, loneliness and grief—to many people. However, it has brought people and communities closer together, and there is now a greater emphasis on supporting local businesses, helping one another, being supportive and demonstrating kindness.

I remind the chamber that I am the co-convenor of the cross-party group on mental health and deputy convenor of the Health and Sport Committee. During the first lockdown, as a volunteer, I phoned people who were isolating and isolated.

The impact of the pandemic on mental health has been highlighted well in the Scottish Government's mental health tracker study, which was published on Monday this week. Although the report makes for tough reading, it is important to remember that behind each number is a person—a loved one, a friend and a family member.

I will support the minister's amendment, which focuses on proactive approaches to dealing with the national trauma that we face. Yesterday, during the Health and Sport Committee's budget scrutiny, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport covered in detail the interventions that the Government is implementing to support many mental health actions. In response to the challenges, the Scottish Government has increased the support that is available to people who need it most. Children and young people, people who face redundancy, those with long-term physical health conditions and people with disabilities are among the key groups that the support focuses on.

An important example of that support is the distress brief intervention programme, which is an innovative programme that provides vital support to people who are experiencing emotional distress. If someone presents as being in distress to the emergency services or in a primary care setting, the distress brief intervention programme can offer them a call from a trained operator within 24 hours. They will then be provided with up to two weeks of one-to-one support to help them to address issues that might be contributing to their distress. As part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic, a new pathway to the DBI service was created through NHS 24's mental

health hub, and it has been used by more than 12,800 people, which is welcome.

Last year, I raised with the minister the issue of support for our front-line workers, including our NHS staff. As part of NHS Dumfries and Galloway's vaccination team, I have heard directly from health and care staff about the extent to which they are coping—or not coping—with their mental health at this time. I am pleased that, since the beginning of the pandemic, the Scottish Government has provided more than £18 million, which has included support for our front-line workers. Extra capacity for computerised cognitive behavioural therapy, which has been a lifeline for many front-line and NHS workers, has been supported through the provision of £1.2 million. I encourage the minister to ensure that those services continue to be available, and to be expanded as the need arises.

I have also raised the issue of support for people in areas of rural Scotland, such as Dumfries and Galloway, where social isolation and loneliness have worsened during the pandemic. I thank Support in Mind and RSABI for their fantastic work in combating rural isolation and supporting mental health. I would be grateful if the minister could outline specifically what support is available for people in rural areas.

I want to highlight the work of Fixing Us, which grew out of the fixing dad organisation. It is an excellent example of how to build a healthier Scotland, both physically and mentally, through a social prescribing approach.

I welcome the steps that the Government is taking, and I reiterate that we need to continue to ensure that folk are supported as much as possible during this extremely challenging time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches. We are still a little bit over our time.

16:14

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): This has been an excellent debate, albeit too brief, with thoughtful and well-argued contributions from across the political divide. I, too, congratulate Alex Cole-Hamilton and the Liberal Democrats on their initiative in securing this afternoon's debate.

Many speakers, including Mary Fee and Pauline McNeill, referenced the pandemic and said that the measures that have been necessary to keep it under control have had significant impacts on Scotland's mental health, with many people experiencing and reporting loneliness, isolation and worsening mental health.

Of course, as many speakers have testified, Scotland was already experiencing a mental

health crisis prior to Covid-19. Too many people were burdened with acute emotional trauma and the perceived stigma of mental health issues and were failing to access the help and support that they needed.

It is important not to underestimate the stigma effect on individuals, their families and their friends. I remember a health education poster that I had on my office wall as a young front-line social worker in the early 1980s—I was young once, Presiding Officer. It said, "Six months after Alice had her nervous breakdown, her friends are still recovering".

Our amendment seeks to add to the motion:

"notes with deep concern the further increase in the number of deaths by suicide in 2019".

The ISD Scotland report in 2016 said that the suicide rate appeared to be higher in Scotland than in England and Wales. It noted that suicide was three times more likely among those in the most deprived areas than among those in the least deprived areas, that three quarters of those who died were men and that nearly 50 per cent were under 54.

Labour has questioned the effectiveness of the Scottish Government's action plan. Mary Fee said that, if there is to be transformational change, now is the time to be serious about it and rebuild mental health services to enable us to deal with the pandemic. Alex Cole-Hamilton, in a passionate speech, said that the mental health statistics are shocking and that he is deeply concerned. He said that we need local direction with an expansion of the mental health workforce, noting that those with mental health issues are facing the longest queue in the NHS.

The minister spoke about the new and significant challenges across Scotland and said that now is a time of national trauma. Donald Cameron and Alison Johnstone made similar points, saying that we are facing a mental health crisis and expressing their concern about the number of recorded suicides going up.

I will conclude, because I know that time is tight. I agree with Inclusion Scotland that Covid has pushed people to the brink, and particularly those with disabilities and pre-existing mental health issues. Those with a disability who are digitally excluded face a double whammy of disadvantage.

As the battle against Covid-19 seems to be succeeding, which is of course good news, we face conflict on a new front—a mental health pandemic. The curse of loneliness, isolation and despair, mixed with the ever-present stigma of seeking help, is a crucial dilemma. As Michelle Obama said,

“At the root of this dilemma is the way we view mental health in this country ... Whether an illness affects your heart, your leg or your brain, it’s still an illness, and there should be no distinction.”

16:18

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I welcome the opportunity to close in this debate on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives. I am grateful to the Liberal Democrats for allocating some of their time to this crucial topic. I wish that we had all afternoon to discuss it.

Donald Cameron opened his speech by pointing out that there was a mental health crisis in Scotland long before the Covid pandemic, with unacceptably long waiting times for mental health treatments, as well as chronic workforce pressures. This debate is nothing new and the issues have been rehearsed in the chamber many times. Of course, the Covid pandemic has exacerbated the crisis hugely.

I heard a child and adolescent psychiatrist claim that the number of young people who are seeking help with their mental health has “skyrocketed”. Dr Omer Moghraby has reported seeing young people presenting to accident and emergency after having taken overdoses or cut themselves severely. Some have changed their eating patterns so severely that they have lost a lot of weight, and medical colleagues have had to take measures to save their lives. He said:

“The closure of schools, the lack of contact with friends and stopping all sports activities is having a particularly damaging effect on children.

One can only say the major factor across it all is pandemic - the lack of activities, the lack of schooling, the lack of opportunities for these young people and probably a deterioration of wellbeing of their parents not being able to cope.”

I thought that that last phrase, “the deterioration of wellbeing” of parents was very powerful, and we have to consider that as a contributory factor to a child’s mental health.

In Dr Moghraby’s considerations, we see the lack of physical activity as a significant contributor to poor mental health. For me, that highlights two aspects of how the crisis must be tackled: timely interventions for those caught in a state of poor mental health, and, of course, how we prevent people from falling into poor mental health in the first place—how we ensure that people have a coping mechanism. The latter aspect is why music, sport, art and drama are so important as a conduit into social interaction. Opportunity to participate has been eroded over the years, especially in less affluent areas, and that has been exacerbated by the Covid lockdown. I do not apologise for once again highlighting the need to focus on prevention.

The importance of the third sector is always underestimated and underresourced by the Government. There are so many fantastic organisations with specific skills that are under extreme financial pressure. All the while, CAMHS are under intolerable pressure, which has led to more than 1,000 children in desperate need of help waiting more than a year.

Mental health is an acute health issue, and we need to understand how investment finally gets to the third sector. The Health and Sport Committee reported that it is difficult to track progress of individual integration authorities’ spending on mental health, which creates difficulty in tracking progress against the Scottish Government’s commitment to mental health support services. Although the extra finance is very welcome, we must be able to track where that investment goes and measure that against outcomes.

There is so much that we could discuss and debate regarding a real solution. In the Government’s amendment, we see the reason why so little progress has been made by the SNP during its time in office. Instead of accepting that there is a mental health crisis and tackling it head on, the SNP instead tries to shift blame yet again on to the UK Government. To the Scottish Government, that is the job done. It has no ability to take responsibility for a crisis that has been a long time in the making. It is a crisis that, in my view, is linked to drug-related deaths, of which Scotland has the worst number in Europe. That is what happens when the SNP does not have the eye on the ball and all its focus is elsewhere.

As we emerge, I hope, from the Covid crisis, mental health services will be ever more crucial. Nothing that I have heard from the SNP tells me that it has a plan with which it will be able to tackle the enormity of the crisis.

16:23

Clare Haughey: I thank members across the chamber for their input. The debate is especially timely, given our announcement yesterday of an additional £120 million of funding for our mental health recovery and renewal fund. The mental health of Scotland’s population remains a top priority for the Government.

The impact of Covid on the whole population is wide ranging, and our understanding of it will evolve as the pandemic progresses. We already know that the pandemic has exacerbated underlying inequalities, particularly for those with pre-existing mental illness.

The mental health transition and recovery plan and the investments that I outlined in my opening speech give a sense of the Government’s priorities. We are entirely focused on meeting the

pandemic's substantial challenges to mental health and wellbeing for both those with pre-existing mental illness and those who are experiencing mental health problems for the first time.

We must act now. We must ensure that appropriate, timely and effective support is available to all who need it. In particular, we must ensure that the best possible mental health care and support is in place for Scotland's children and young people—Scotland's future generations.

As members know, the actions that are set out in our transition and recovery plan summarise the range of our response to Covid-19. We know that there will be impacts in terms of inequalities, employability, relationships, people having pre-existing mental health conditions and people needing specialist help. Our recovery and renewal fund will ensure the delivery of the plan.

Many important points have been raised during the debate, and I will address some of them. Donald Cameron and Brian Whittle accused me and the Scottish Government of Westminster blaming. However, we know that poverty is among the biggest drivers of poor mental health and that cutting people's benefits and imposing rape clauses are among the biggest drivers of poor mental health and poverty. They need to own that. *[Interruption.]* No, I will not take an intervention.

Donald Cameron accused the Scottish Government of not being on track to deliver the 800 mental health workers mentioned in action 15 of the strategy. I assure Mr Cameron that we are on track to have 800 mental health workers in place by the end of the 2022 financial year.

Mary Fee called for action, and that is precisely what the Government has taken in expanding services throughout the pandemic and laying out a clear plan for the recovery of mental health services.

I ask Pauline McNeill to read the transition and recovery plan. I acknowledge that she is new to this particular area of mental health, and that might address some of the concerns that she raised in her speech.

Alison Johnstone referred to several types of mental health need, including in employment. She also spoke about economic instability and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on various groups of people. The transition and recovery plan covers those needs and lays out our response to the mental health impacts of the pandemic on a wide range of groups.

Over the past year, mental health has been talked about more than ever before. We continue to check in on our family, our loved ones and our colleagues as much as possible, and we have

learned that self-care is key, as is continued access to specialist support for those who need it. There are no positives to what we have all been through over the past year, but Covid-19 has shone a light on mental health and the Government is rising to the challenge of ensuring that the right help is available in the right place and at the right time for those who need it.

16:27

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): As other members have acknowledged, this has been a very worthwhile debate, with valuable contributions across the chamber.

At the start of the debate, Alex Cole-Hamilton reminded us that the motion asks only that Parliament accept the simple but important fact that

“there is a mental health crisis in Scotland.”

Those who are involved in the sector—I pay tribute to each and every one of them—recognise that, and those who are in need of support, whose numbers grow by the hour, certainly recognise it. Even the Scottish Government, given the welcome and surely coincidental funding announcement that was made by Kate Forbes yesterday, appears, at least implicitly, to recognise it. So why cannot ministers bring themselves to acknowledge the crisis for what it is? How can it possibly serve the interests of those who are desperately in need of support or those who are trying their best to provide support that ministers stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the crisis? For what reason is the Government so determined to avoid acknowledging the crisis that it seeks to airbrush it out of the motion, as it did when the Parliament debated a similar motion 15 months ago? In that debate, we heard from MSPs across the chamber painful testimony of the experiences endured by their constituents. We have heard the same again today.

Alex Cole-Hamilton talked about the effects of isolation, and Donald Cameron and David Stewart drew attention to the rising suicide rate. Mary Fee rightly warned that, as bad as things have got in recent months, we are far from seeing the worst of it. Alison Johnstone and Pauline McNeill focused on the particular stresses in relation to CAMHS. Stuart McMillan talked about the continuing issue of stigma, and Emma Harper highlighted the rural dimension to the issue, which was welcome.

However, the crisis in mental health predates the pandemic. In March last year, children's mental health waiting times reached record highs. Some adults were waiting two years for treatment. Indeed, the Government's own waiting times target has not been met since it was introduced, in 2014. Services are overwhelmed and we know

that our police are far too often left to pick up the pieces, as Edward Mountain said. Officers not only attend individuals in distress; they can be asked to spend entire shifts accompanying those who are in crisis to safe emergency treatments through A and E. That is not sensible or safe. There should be help on hand from trained professionals for anyone who needs it.

As everyone has acknowledged this afternoon, all those problems have been pushed to the extreme over the past year. Last week, my colleague Beatrice Wishart revealed that research had found that children and young people in Shetland have waited, collectively, 1,300 days beyond the 18-week target in the year so far. That is a 4,500 per cent increase compared with the previous year. Those are not just numbers; they are evidence of people having taken the difficult step of reaching out only to find that the support that they need is not there.

That is not the fault of the staff, who are stretched to their limit and doing their best. Neither does it diminish the additional resource that ministers have committed—which is still not enough, although it is considerably more than it would have been had we simply accepted the Government's previous arguments that it was doing all that it could. That evidence is, though, an argument for saying that, as we begin the process of rebuilding from the pandemic, we must learn from past mistakes.

That will require honesty about the scale of the challenge that we face and about the extent of the crisis that exists. Clare Haughey argued that nothing is to be gained by describing what is happening in mental health as a crisis. Why, then, has the Scottish Government accepted that we face a climate and nature crisis? Why, after 14 years of ministers sticking their heads in the sand while pointing the finger at Westminster, has the First Minister finally accepted that we face a drugs death crisis in Scotland?

In the same way, we now need the Scottish Government to accept the evidence and acknowledge that we face a mental health crisis. We need the treatment of mental and physical ill health to be put on the same statutory footing. We need a third sector that is fully engaged and involved in the delivery of joined-up services. We need appropriate expertise to be available when and where it is needed, no matter where in the country someone lives. We need resources beyond what the finance secretary has announced, welcome though those are. Finally, we need strategies on mental health and suicide prevention to be updated in a timely fashion and informed by the expertise of those who work in the sector and those with lived experience. We need all of that and more, but we also need the Scottish

Government to face the fact that Scotland has a mental health crisis.

Given what we have heard today, what we know from our constituencies and regions, and what we hear consistently from experts and those who are desperate for help, more of the same simply is not good enough. Parliament passed up an opportunity to declare a mental health crisis 15 months ago. To do so again, in the face of all the evidence, would be negligent in the extreme. I urge Parliament to support the motion in Alex Cole-Hamilton's name.

Business Motions

16:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-24155, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 23 February 2021 (Hybrid)

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Ministerial Statement: COVID-19

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Heat Networks (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

6.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 24 February 2021 (Hybrid)

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Economy, Fair Work and Culture; Education and Skills

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

4.50 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 25 February 2021 (Hybrid)

12.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

12.30 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Health and Sport

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Budget (Scotland) (No. 5) Bill

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Scottish Rate Resolution

6.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 2 March 2021 (Hybrid)

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Ministerial Statement: COVID-19

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Defamation and Malicious Publication (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.30 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 3 March 2021 (Hybrid)

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Communities and Local Government; Social Security and Older People

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

4.50 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 4 March 2021 (Hybrid)

12.30 Parliamentary Bureau motions

12.30 pm First Minister's Questions

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Question Time

followed by Portfolio Questions: Finance

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Bill

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Scottish Parliamentary Standards (Sexual Harassment and Complaints Process) Bill

followed by Scottish Government Debate: International Women's Day - Inspiring Women

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.40 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 22 February 2021, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next item of business is consideration of business motions S5M-24156 to S5M-24159, on the stage 2 timetables for four bills.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 5 March 2021.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 5 March 2021.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the University of St. Andrews (Degrees in Medicine and Dentistry) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 5 March 2021.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2 be completed by 5 March 2021.—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motions agreed to.***Parliamentary Bureau Motions**

16:33

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of nine Parliamentary Bureau motions. I call Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, to speak to and move motions S5M-24160 to S5M-24164, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments, and to move motions S5M-24166 and S5M-24167, on approval of SSIs; S5M-24168, on recess dates; and S5M-24171, on committee meeting times.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 14) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/35) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 15) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/54) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/49) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel, Public Health Information and Pre-Departure Testing) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/34) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel, Prohibition on Travel from the United Arab Emirates) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/52) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Amendment of List of Responders) (Scotland) Order 2021 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type B Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of the pre-election campaign period from 25 March to 4 May 2021 (inclusive), the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 25 March to 4 May 2021 (inclusive).

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Committee on the Scottish Government Handling of Harassment Complaints can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament on Wednesday 24 February and Wednesday 3 March 2021.—[*Graeme Dey*]

The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey): I will speak to the three motions on Coronavirus restrictions, as I am required to do under the Covid protocol.

Motion S5M-24160 modifies some of the restrictions and requirements in relation to prohibiting mortgage repossessions from taking place in level 3 and level 4 areas. Those regulations came into force on 23 January.

Motion S5M-24161 sets out changes to the level that applies to the Western Isles, moving that area from level 3 to level 4. All other areas remain in the same level. Those regulations came into force on 30 January.

Motion S5M-24162 provides that suitable premises required to close to the public in level 3 and 4 areas may be used for purposes connected to an election; removes restrictions placed on premises used by food and drink businesses in level 3 areas where premises are to be used in connection with the carrying out of electoral functions; makes amendments to level 4 areas to enable places of worship and holiday accommodation to be used in connection with the carrying out of electoral functions; adjusts the restrictions on drive-in and drive-through events to make clear that they are not permitted in level 3 and 4 areas; and adjusts examples of reasonable excuse to enter a level 4 area to bring the marriage, civil partnership and funerals excuses into line with the excuses to leave home for those who are living in a level 4 area. Finally, the regulations extend the expiry date of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Directions by Local Authorities) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/262) from 31 January 2021 to 31 March 2021. The regulations came into force on 29 January.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, minister. That was helpful. The questions on the motions will all be put at decision time.

Decision Time

16:36

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The first question is, that amendment S5M-24137.3, in the name of John Swinney, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. I suspend the meeting to allow members, both in the chamber and externally, to access the voting app.

16:36

Meeting suspended.

16:39

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: We move straight to the vote. The question is, that amendment S5M-24137.3, in the name of John Swinney, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, be agreed to. This will be a one-minute division.

The vote is now closed. If members had any difficulty in voting, they should let me know by raising a point of order.

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I was not able to vote. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Ms Mitchell would have voted no. I will make sure that your vote is added to the list, Ms Mitchell.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)

(SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire)

(Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-24137.3, in the name of John Swinney, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, is: For 61, Against 64, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-24137.1, in the name of Jamie Greene, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. This will be a one-minute division. Again, members should let me know if they have any difficulty in voting.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Abstentions

McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-24137.1, in the name of Jamie Greene, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, is: For 64, Against 60, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. This is on the amended motion in the name of Willie Rennie.

The vote is now closed. Please let me know if you had any difficulties in exercising your vote.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My voting app has frozen—even in this nice mild weather—and I could not vote. I—[*Inaudible.*]—for the motion.

The Presiding Officer: Could members keep the noise down? I did not quite hear the end of what you said, Mr Rumbles. Did you indicate that you would have voted yes? Is that right?

Mike Rumbles: Yes.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Rumbles. I will add your vote as a yes to the amended motion.

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I could not hear the results of the votes on the amendments. If you tell me them, I can tell you how I am voting on the motion. I know that Mr Greene's amendment went through, but did Mr Swinney's amendment go through?

The Presiding Officer: The vote was on Mr Rennie's motion, as amended by Jamie Greene. It is a Lib Dem motion, as amended by the Conservatives; Mr Swinney's amendment was not carried.

Alex Neil: But was the motion amended by Mr—[*Inaudible.*]—because I could not hear the result. The connection is—[*Inaudible.*]

The Presiding Officer: The result of the vote was that Mr Rennie's motion was amended by Mr Greene. It is a Liberal Democrat motion, amended by the Conservatives. The Scottish National Party amendment was not carried.

Alex Neil: In that case, my vote is no.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Neil; your vote has been added.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My app also froze. I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms McAlpine; your no vote will be added to the division list.

I can tell Gillian Martin and Bob Doris that their votes were registered.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)

Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Abstentions

McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S5M-24137, in the name of Willie Rennie, on education, as amended, is: For 65, Against 58, Abstentions 1.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament believes that the support, services and decision-making provided by Education Scotland and the SQA have not met the expectations or requirements of hardworking teachers, pupils or parents throughout the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; recalls that serious concerns existed about the performance and structure of these organisations for years before the pandemic struck, including those expressed by Parliament in its resolution on the debate on motion S5M-04920 on 29 March 2017; considers that there is compelling evidence that neither body is fit for purpose and that they have lost the confidence of teachers, pupils and parents, and therefore calls for substantial reform as part of the recovery

of education, with Education Scotland separated into independent inspection and policy functions and the SQA to be grounded in the teaching profession and made more accountable; expresses concern about the reported involvement of both organisations and the Scottish Government in the ongoing OECD review, and, given the urgency of the matter and limited opportunity for scrutiny, and in the spirit of full transparency, calls on the Scottish Government to immediately release any findings already reportedly delivered to the Scottish Ministers by the OECD.

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Although I cast my vote, I incorrectly voted yes to the amended motion. I appreciate that the vote now stands, but I would not like the Conservatives to get too excited. It was an error—I voted yes on the basis that I thought that Mr Swinney's amendment had been agreed to. In case there was any dubiety regarding my vote, I put that on the record. I see from the vote margin that it would not have made a difference to the outcome of the vote.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Doris. That clarification is noted, and will be noted in the *Official Report*.

The next question is, that amendment S5M-24138.3, in the name of Clare Haughey, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. This will be a one-minute division.

The vote is now closed. Members should let me know if they had any difficulties in voting.

Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I do not think that my vote was recorded. I am not sure what was happening with the device, but I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: I will make sure that your vote against the amendment is added and recorded properly.

Alex Neil: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My voting system was not working either. I would have voted yes.

The Presiding Officer: Mr Neil would have voted yes. I will make sure that your vote is recorded, Mr Neil.

I confirm to Jeremy Balfour that his vote has been recorded.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-24138.3, in the name of Clare Haughey, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, is: For 60, Against 64, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S5M-24138.2, in the name of Donald Cameron, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members may cast their votes. This is a one-minute vote on the amendment in the name of Donald Cameron.

The vote is now closed. Members should let me know if they were unable to vote.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)

Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-24138.2, in the name of Donald Cameron, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, is: For 65, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S5M-24138.1, in the name of Mary Fee, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. This will be a one-minute division on Mary Fee's amendment.

That vote is now closed. Members should let me know if they were unable to vote.

Alex Neil: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My system is not working; the BlueJeans reception is very variable. I would have voted no on Mary Fee's amendment.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Mr Neil. You would have voted no. I will make sure that your vote is recorded.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)

Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on amendment S5M-24138.1, in the name of Mary Fee, which seeks to amend motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, is: For 65, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a one-minute division.

The vote is now closed. Members should let me know if they wish to raise a point of order about their vote.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The app did not allow me to vote. If I had been able to vote, I would have voted no.

The Presiding Officer: Thank you, Ms Campbell. I will make sure that your vote no is registered.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Reform)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 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)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Ind)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinrossshire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)

Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and
 Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (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)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine)
 (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S5M-24138, in the name of Alex Cole-Hamilton, on mental health, as amended, is: For 65, Against 58, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recalls its resolution on the debate on motion S5M-20035 on mental health on 27 November 2019; now recognises that there is a mental health crisis in Scotland; notes with concern the potential for an unsustainable increase in demand for CAMHS and other mental health services, many of which already experience unacceptably long waiting times; recognises the need for both improved access to NHS mental health services and greater support for third sector organisations to reduce waiting times and deliver urgently needed care; considers that maintaining good mental health is as important as maintaining good physical health; believes that further efforts are required to promote self-care for mental health; notes with deep concern the further increase in the number of deaths by suicide in 2019 and the reported increase in suicidal thoughts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; considers the continued excessive waits for access to CAMHS and high proportion of young people who still have their referral rejected to be unacceptable; is disappointed at

the failure to implement an effective transitions strategy to support patients moving between services; acknowledges that mental health services cannot tackle the crisis without increased resources, and therefore believes it is regrettable that, in recent Scottish Budgets, funding for mental health services has failed to keep up with rises in overall health funding.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motions S5M-24160, S5M-24161, S5M-24162, S5M-24163, S5M-24164, S5M-24166, S5M-24167, S5M-24168 and S5M-24171, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

Motions agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 14) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/35) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 15) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/54) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/49) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel, Public Health Information and Pre-Departure Testing) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/34) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel, Prohibition on Travel from the United Arab Emirates) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/52) be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Amendment of List of Responders) (Scotland) Order 2021 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type B Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of the pre-election campaign period from 25 March to 4 May 2021 (inclusive), the following parliamentary recess dates under Rule 2.3.1: 25 March to 4 May 2021 (inclusive).

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Committee on the Scottish Government Handling of Harassment Complaints can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament on Wednesday 24 February and Wednesday 3 March 2021.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The Parliament has just supported my amended motion. The position on the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Education Scotland, and on the publication of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report, is clear, and the will of Parliament is clear as well.

In the time since the vote, has the Government indicated to you, Presiding Officer, when it plans to respond to that vote? The vote is clear.

The Presiding Officer: As Mr Rennie might imagine, the Government has not indicated, between the vote and now, what its intentions will be. However, the Parliament has made its views known, and I am sure that the Government will respond in due course to the motion and the views expressed by the Parliament.

Meeting closed at 17:04.

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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