



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 4, No. 24, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 5 September 2024

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

- 1. General Questions:** Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.
- 2. First Minister's Questions:** Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).
- 3. Recognising the UN's Declaration for Future Generations:** The Parliament debated S6M-14137 in the name of Sarah Boyack—That the Parliament recognises the UN's Declaration on Future Generations, a document launched in relation to the UN's Summit of the Future in September 2024; acknowledges the calls urging Scotland to be governed with future generations and their interests in mind; notes the belief that Scotland must commit to playing its part to seize the global opportunity that present generations possess to leave a better future for generations to come, and further notes calls to advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including in the Lothian region, in order to build strong and resilient foundations to achieve this.
- 4. Portfolio Questions:** Questions on Net Zero and Energy, and Transport were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers.
- 5. Programme for Government – Eradicating Child Poverty:** The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Jenny Gilruth) moved S6M-14322—That the Parliament notes the actions set out in the Programme for Government 2024-25 that focus on eradicating child poverty as the single greatest priority for the Scottish

Government; recognises that sustained and cohesive effort is needed across all levels of government and in all parts of society to deliver on this national mission, especially at a time when the public finances are under acute pressure after 14 years of austerity; welcomes continued investment of around £3 billion in 2024-25 to eradicate poverty, mitigate the impacts of the cost of living crisis and invest in prevention to break the cycle of poverty; notes analysis of the Child Poverty Action Group, which estimates that low-income families in Scotland will be around £28,000 better off by the time that their child turns 18 when compared to other families across the UK; further notes modelling that estimates that 100,000 children will be kept out of relative poverty this year as a result of Scottish Government policies such as the Scottish Child Payment; recognises the Scottish Government's commitment to working constructively with the UK Government to end child poverty once and for all, and agrees that the UK Government has the opportunity to lift thousands of children out of poverty in Scotland by taking action in the Autumn Budget to remove the two-child limit.

Miles Briggs moved amendment S6M-14322.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-14322 in the name of Jenny Gilruth (Programme for Government - Eradicating Child Poverty), leave out from "14" to end and insert "17 years of financial mismanagement by the Scottish Government; notes that 26% of children live in poverty in Scotland, and that this rate has remained largely unchanged since 2007; recognises that the number of children in temporary accommodation has reached 10,000, which has increased by 138% since 2014; urges the Scottish Government to recognise that child poverty has a detrimental impact on the health of children, and notes that, by September 2023, the percentage of children waiting over 12 weeks for medical care increased to 49.8%, and that the total number of paediatric waits was 10,512, which was a 114.6% increase from October 2012; calls on the Scottish Government to recognise that the poverty-related attainment gap poses another barrier for children, and notes that, in 2024, the pass rates at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher were at record low levels since 2016; urges the Scottish Ministers to accept the findings of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee's report, Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment, and calls on the Scottish Government to deliver a holistic strategy for tackling child poverty, which ensures that no child in Scotland goes without safe housing, modern and efficient local healthcare, and high-quality educational opportunities."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 29, Against 91 (including 3 by proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Paul O'Kane moved amendment S6M-14322.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-14322 in the name of Jenny Gilruth (Programme for Government - Eradicating Child Poverty), leave out from first "notes" to end and insert "agrees that child poverty should be a national mission for the Scottish Government, but deeply regrets that, after 17 years of a Scottish National Party (SNP) administration, there are 30,000 more children in poverty; acknowledges that child poverty rates across the UK have risen under

the economic mismanagement of the previous Conservative administration, but also recognises that Scotland has its own legally-binding child poverty reduction targets that the SNP administration is likely to miss, despite successive First Ministers declaring action on child poverty to be a priority; notes the damning assessment by Scotland's Poverty and Inequality Commission that progress from the SNP administration in tackling child poverty "is slow or not evident at all"; is deeply concerned by the Scottish Government's decision to cut measures that act as barriers to poverty, including cuts to the affordable housing budget, parental employability schemes, the Fuel Insecurity Fund and the freeze to the Scottish Welfare Fund; condemns cuts to education funding, including the Pupil Equity Fund, digital device provision and attainment funding in the poorest local authorities; agrees that there is a need to tackle in-work poverty and so welcomes the work of the UK Labour administration to strengthen workers' rights, review Universal Credit, build a fairer social security system, and deliver a pay rise for 200,000 of the lowest-paid people in Scotland with a genuine living wage; welcomes the establishment of a cross-government Child Poverty Ministerial Taskforce by the UK Government, and encourages the Scottish Government to work collaboratively to tackle the root causes of poverty across Scotland."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 21 (including 1 by proxy vote), Against 95 (including 2 by proxy vote), Abstentions 4).

Maggie Chapman moved amendment S6M-14322.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-14322 in the name of Jenny Gilruth (Programme for Government - Eradicating Child Poverty), leave out from "; further notes" to "once and for all" and insert ", but also notes the Child Poverty Action Group's finding that Scottish Government policy is not yet adequate to ensure that child poverty targets are met, and that bold, decisive action is required; believes that part of that bold, decisive action must include increasing the Scottish Child Payment to at least £40 a week by the end of the current parliamentary session, providing accessible employability support, especially for lone parents, and establishing an independent review of childcare in Scotland to ensure the provision of what is most needed, as well as robust rent controls to complement affordable housing; notes with deep concern the apparent change in position from the Scottish Government on free school meal provision for all primary school children, with the Programme for Government only committed to expanding free school meals to those in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment in P6 and P7; calls on the Scottish Government to urgently confirm whether it is still its intention to complete the full roll-out that was previously promised; believes that the previously promised Human Rights Bill for Scotland would have provided the framework for improving Scotland's public services, delivering its minimum core obligations, and thereby eradicating child poverty; expresses its deep dismay that the Human Rights Bill does not appear in the Programme for Government; calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that the burdens of its financial decisions do not fall upon the shoulders of Scotland's most marginalised people, including families in poverty".

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 8, Against 113 (including 3 by proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 67 (including 2 by proxy vote), Against 54 (including 1 by proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

6. Decision Time: The Parliament took a decision on item 5 as noted above.

The meeting closed at 5.12 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
5 September 2024

Appendix
(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Subordinate Legislation

Negative Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 5 September 2024 and are subject to the negative procedure—

Local Services Franchises (Traffic Commissioner Notices and Panels) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/229)
laid under section 81(3) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001

Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/230)
laid under section 113(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

National Health Service (Free Prescriptions and Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/233)
laid under section 105(2) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978

Laid Only Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 5 September 2024 and are not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 (Commencement) Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/231 (C.18))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Act 2024 (Commencement) Regulations 2024 (SSI 2024/2024/232 (C. 19))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Other Documents

The following documents were laid before the Parliament on 5 September 2024 are not subject to parliamentary procedure—

ILF Scotland Annual Report and Financial Statements Year Ended 31 March 2024 (SG/2024/162) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

The King's Printer for Scotland: Report covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (SG/2024/193) laid at the request of a member of the Scottish Government and not under any laying power

Quality Meat Scotland Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024 (SG/2024/194) laid under Section 22 (5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and Article 12 of the Quality Meat Scotland Order 2008

Report on proposals and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions following annual targets for 2021 and 2022 not being met (SG/2024/98) laid under Section 36 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Response to the Climate Change Committee: Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland – 2023 Report to Parliament (SG/2024/192) laid at the request of a member of the Scottish Government and not under any laying power

The Skills Development Scotland Co. Limited Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 (SG/2024/186) laid under Section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

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