



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 5, No. 50, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 19 November 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Economy and Gaelic, and then on Finance and Local Government, were answered by the Deputy First Minister, a Cabinet Secretary and Ministers

2. Urgent Question: An urgent question, to ask the Scottish Government how it will recognise the Scottish Men's National Team qualifying for the World Cup for the first time since 1998, was answered by Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Neil Gray).

3. Scotland's Skills System: Daniel Johnson moved S6M-19756—That the Parliament believes that Scotland's skills system is letting down young people and holding back economic growth, and further believes that there needs to be a new partnership between education and industry, with better careers advice in schools central to it, and new Scottish industrial pathways to link school subjects to future careers, guaranteed industrial placements for secondary school pupils including in industry and a clearing system for apprenticeships, so that good candidates do not fall out of the system.

The Minister for Higher and Further Education (Ben Macpherson) moved amendment S6M-19756.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19756 in the name of Daniel Johnson (Scotland's Skills System), leave out from first "believes" to end and insert "agrees that there needs to be greater partnership between education and

industry, with better careers advice in schools central to it, and clear and coherent Scottish pathways to link school and college courses to future careers, improved placements for secondary school pupils, and better information on career choices, job prospects and earnings, alongside an ongoing commitment to apprenticeships; acknowledges the significant progress made over the years to deliver a record number of apprentices in training at the end of 2024-25; notes that, despite the impact of Brexit and a failing UK economic model, resulting in workforce challenges and barriers to trade, Scotland is the best performing part of the UK for inward investment outside of London, has a lower unemployment rate than the UK, and has near record positive destinations, and agrees that independence offers the best opportunity for Scotland's economy to grow and create wealth and prosperity for all."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 58, Against 60 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Murdo Fraser moved amendment S6M-19756.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19756 in the name of Daniel Johnson (Scotland's Skills System), leave out from ", with better" to end and insert "; believes that this must be underpinned by a demand-led skills system that equips young people with the qualifications that employers need to grow Scotland's economy; notes that the Scottish National Party administration has failed to pass on over £170 million of Apprenticeship Levy funding and has provided around 10,000 fewer apprenticeship places than learning providers requested, contributing to a widening skills gap in key sectors including hospitality, construction, engineering and care; further notes that colleges have faced a 20% real-terms funding cut, leading to job losses, falling student numbers and financial instability, and calls for urgent reform to invest in colleges, fix Scotland's broken apprenticeship system, address skills shortages and allow local employers to shape training that matches their workforce needs."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 53, Against 64 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 1).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 57, Abstentions 0).

4. Education: Pam Duncan-Glancy moved S6M-19754—That the Parliament recognises that pupils and staff are being failed by the deteriorating learning and working environment in Scottish schools, overseen by the Scottish National Party administration.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Jenny Gilruth) moved amendment S6M-19754.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19754 in the name of Pam Duncan-Glancy (Education), leave out from "that pupils" to end and insert "the challenges in Scotland's schools post-COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with attendance and

an increase in additional support needs (ASN); welcomes the additional funding agreed to in the Budget for 2025-26 to support outcomes for children with ASN, and to support and enhance the ASN workforce; acknowledges the key role that staff and teachers play to support children to succeed; welcomes the agreement last week, which ensures that Scotland's teachers remain the highest paid in the UK, with an uplift of 7.5% over two years; remains committed to undertaking further work to reduce teacher workload, which sits alongside the commitment to reduce class contact time, and agrees to recognise and celebrate the successes of Scotland's young people."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 64 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 53, Abstentions 1).

Miles Briggs moved amendment S6M-19754.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19754 in the name of Pam Duncan-Glancy (Education), insert at end "; notes with deep concern the decline in standards and increasing pupil violence, which are intensifying pressures on teachers and support staff; believes that these trends reflect years of underinvestment and a failure to provide the support and resources needed to maintain safe and effective learning environments, and calls on the Scottish Government to deliver urgent action to raise attainment, improve discipline in classrooms and support teachers to deliver the high-quality education that every young person in Scotland deserves."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 53, Against 63 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 63 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 54, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the challenges in Scotland's schools post-COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with attendance and an increase in additional support needs (ASN); welcomes the additional funding agreed to in the Budget for 2025-26 to support outcomes for children with ASN, and to support and enhance the ASN workforce; acknowledges the key role that staff and teachers play to support children to succeed; welcomes the agreement last week, which ensures that Scotland's teachers remain the highest paid in the UK, with an uplift of 7.5% over two years; remains committed to undertaking further work to reduce teacher workload, which sits alongside the commitment to reduce class contact time, and agrees to recognise and celebrate the successes of Scotland's young people

5. Urgent Question: An urgent question, to ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that Professor Alexis Jay's comments on grooming gang inquiries were misrepresented during a debate on the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill, was answered by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Natalie Don-Innes).

6. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19810—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 25 November 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 26 November 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; Health and Social Care

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 27 November 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.15 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.15 pm Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Questions

followed by Portfolio Questions: Social Justice and Housing

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 2 December 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 3 December 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and
Parliamentary Business; Justice and Home Affairs

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 4 December 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Education and Skills

followed by Education, Children and Young People Committee Debate: Widening
Access to Higher Education

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 24 November 2025, 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.

The motion was agreed to.

7. Stage 1 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19811—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Building Safety Levy (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 9 January 2026.

The motion was agreed to.

8. Stage 1 Timetable: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19812—That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Contract (Formation and Remedies) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 19 December 2025.

The motion was agreed to.

9. Substitution on Committees: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19813—That the Parliament agrees that Colin Beattie be appointed to replace Collette Stevenson as the Scottish National Party substitute on the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Motion Without Notice: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved a motion without notice that, under Rule 11.2.4, Decision Time be brought forward to 5.28 pm.

The motion was agreed to.

11. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 3, 4 and 9 as noted above.

12. The Growing Tide of Ongoing Challenges Facing Rural Communities: The Parliament debated S6M-19548 in the name of Finlay Carson—That the Parliament notes the reported ongoing challenges faced by rural communities, including those in Stranraer, Wigtownshire and across Dumfries and Galloway, in accessing timely and high-quality healthcare; believes that people in these areas often experience longer waits for GP appointments, hospital treatment and emergency services, compared with the national average; expresses particular concern about the reported current shortage of GPs in Wigtownshire, which is placing additional strain on practices and impacting patient care; acknowledges the additional pressures on NHS boards and staff in delivering care across large geographic areas; notes the view that every person, regardless of where they live, should have equal access to essential health services; further notes the calls on the

Scottish Government to set out clear plans to tackle rural health inequalities, including measures to recruit and retain healthcare professionals, including what it sees as much-needed midwives and dentists, address GP shortages, improve ambulance response times and expand diagnostic and treatment capacity in Galloway Community Hospital and other community health hubs, and notes the calls for both an increased provision of community beds and step-down facilities to reduce delayed discharge and enable care closer to home, and for the Scottish Government to work with communities to ensure that future health policy reflects the needs of rural Scotland.

The meeting closed at 6.39 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
19 November 2025

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 19 November 2025—

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, 7th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Stage 1 report on the Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill (SP Paper 912)

Finance and Public Administration Committee, 12th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Report on Subordinate Legislation: The Budget (Scotland) Act 2025 Amendment Regulations 2025 [draft] (SP Paper 914)

Other Documents

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 19 November 2025 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

SCoSS scrutiny report on the draft Social Security (Residence and Presence Requirements) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 (SCoSS/2025/13) laid under sections 22 and 97 of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

Published by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot

Live chat on parliament.scot

You can write to us in any language or contact us
using the Text Relay service or in British Sign
Language through contactScotland-BSL.

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website -
www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information.