



# The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 2, No. 3, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 19 May 2022

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

The meeting opened at 11.40.

**1. General Questions:** Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

**2. First Minister's Questions:** Questions were answered by the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon).

**3. Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Union Canal and its Contribution to Scotland:** The Parliament debated S6M-03839 in the name of Fiona Hyslop— That the Parliament recognises the economic, environmental and social value of the Union Canal in 2022, its bicentenary year; commends the measures taken by Scottish Canals to mark this historic occasion with a year-long calendar of events; understands that this year will feature a blended programme of community activities as well as digital and in-person events that include a flotilla on 21 May, led by Scottish Waterways for All, a 20th birthday party at the Falkirk Wheel on 28 May, the EventScotland-funded Dandelion initiative taking to the water in June, and an online event inviting everyone to sign up for the Canal Challenge 200, to walk, cycle, wheel or paddle 200 times, for 200 days or 200km throughout the year across one or all of Scotland's canals; commends all the staff and volunteers at Scottish Canals for their hard work and dedication over the years in creating flood prevention measures, undertaking regeneration and youth work and preparing for a new marina at Winchburgh; further commends the work of Linlithgow Union Canal Society, which has cared for and developed the canal in the Linlithgow constituency for modern use, as well as undertaking other work, including the Millennium Project; recognises what it sees as the joy that the canal and its routes bring to the local community, and the

reported increasing number of walkers, cyclists and boaters, and wishes the whole team at Scottish Canals well for all its future endeavours.

**4. Portfolio Questions:** Questions on Rural Affairs and Islands were answered by a Cabinet Secretary and a Minister.

**5. Long COVID:** The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Humza Yousaf) moved S6M-04472—That the Parliament recognises the negative impact that long COVID is having on the health and wellbeing of those affected in Scotland; acknowledges that, while some people do recover without clinical support, for many adults and children, the longer-term effects can be debilitating; believes that those who need clinical support in managing the impact of long COVID should have the right help at the right time through health and wellbeing support and services that are accessible in a setting as close to their home as practicable; understands the importance of existing NHS services providing support to those who need it now, but also developing sustainable models of care that will benefit the management of other long-term and complex conditions; recognises the role of NHS boards, working in partnership with local authorities, people living with long COVID and the third sector, to design models of care tailored to the needs of their local populations, which may involve strengthening the co-ordination of existing services, or establishing dedicated services, including long COVID clinics; welcomes the recommendations of the National Strategic Network on the initial priority areas for improvement; further welcomes the first allocation from the Long COVID Support Fund of £3 million across 2022-23 to bolster the support to people with long COVID; notes that this investment includes the introduction of care co-ordinator roles, extra resource to support a patient-centred assessment of need through a range of approaches, including a multi-disciplinary assessment service, and additional capacity for community rehabilitation to support people with issues affecting their day-to-day quality of life; further notes that the Strategic Network will be supporting the education of healthcare staff, including improving access to information resources on the identification, assessment and management of people with long COVID, and considers that research will continue to improve understanding of the long-term effects of COVID-19 and identify effective treatments.

Sandesh Gulhane moved amendment S6M-04472.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-04472 in the name of Humza Yousaf (Long COVID), leave out from "believes" to the end and insert "notes that 151,000 people in Scotland are currently estimated to have long COVID in Scotland, including 64,000 who have been experiencing symptoms for more than a year; recognises that the number of people experiencing symptoms for more than a year has doubled in the last six months, and that faster action from the Scottish Government could have alleviated this and reduced the very substantial pressure on primary care; regrets the pace of the approach taken by the Scottish Government, which has seen funding allocated a full six months after it was promised; regrets that a lack of adequate data from the Scottish Government has contributed to its slow and inadequate response; notes that £10 million for all NHS boards over three financial years will be wholly insufficient to tackle the scale of the problem; regrets the Scottish Government's continued failure to deliver specialist long COVID clinics in

Scotland, meaning that people in Scotland are being left behind without access to the treatment they deserve; calls, in consequence, on the Scottish Government to deliver a network of long COVID clinics across Scotland; requests that the Scottish Government undertakes work with relevant clinical and regulatory partners to develop a long COVID clinical pathway, and asks the Scottish Government to adopt an app-based treatment service to reduce pressures on other parts of the NHS."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 29, Against 62, Abstentions 19).

Jackie Baillie moved amendment S6M-04472.1—

As an amendment to motion S6M-04472 in the name of Humza Yousaf (Long COVID), leave out from "recognises the role" to end and insert "regrets the Scottish Government's complete lack of urgency in delivering its £10 million Long COVID Support Fund, which was announced in September 2021, with nothing allocated before 1 April 2022; further regrets that no network of specialist long COVID clinics or specialist clinical pathways have been established for individuals recovering from the virus and living with recurring symptoms, in contrast to the steps taken in other parts of the UK; notes the Scottish Government's latest announcement, but recognises that it falls short of what is required, and calls on it to take immediate steps to increase and roll out funding to NHS boards, working in partnership with local authorities, to ensure that people living with long COVID are accessing the right support and treatment; recognises the importance of developing services in partnership with those living with long COVID, such as Long COVID Scotland; calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that everyone experiencing long COVID is able to access appropriate occupational health support to enable them to return to employment, and considers that further clinical research will improve understanding of the long-term effects of COVID-19 and identify effective treatments."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 48, Against 61, Abstentions 0).

Alex Cole-Hamilton moved amendment S6M-04472.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-04472 in the name of Humza Yousaf (Long COVID), insert at end "; recognises the work of Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland in operating the vital long COVID support service; regrets that less than 1% of people with long COVID have been referred to the service, and urges the Scottish Government to take immediate action to expand the pathways to support, including enabling GPs to refer to the long COVID support service automatically."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 46, Against 62, Abstentions 1).

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 62, Against 29, Abstentions 18).

**6. Decision Time:** The Parliament took decisions on item 5 as noted above.

The meeting closed at 5.14 pm.

**David McGill**  
Clerk of the Parliament  
19 May 2022

## **Appendix**

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

### **Other Documents**

The following document was laid before the Parliament on 19 May 2022 and is not subject to parliamentary procedure—

**Social security: Progress on implementing the devolved benefits - A report prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland AGS/2022/7** laid under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000

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