

POA Scotland Conference 2023

Peebles Hydro Hotel

25th - 26th October

Verbatim Report

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL

CHAIR: Conference, SNC, Honorary Life Members, invited guests, a warm welcome to you all for this, the POA Scotland's Annual Conference. I hope it's a successful and enjoyable one and I thank Peebles Hydro for again hosting.

I'd like to take this moment to welcome the newest member of the SNC, this will be his first time addressing Conference for this table, Eddie Cruse. I'd also like to mention the POA's newest honorary life member, Willie Carle, who was awarded this at POA Conference at Eastbourne earlier in the year. Well done, Willie, and well deserved.

You will notice a noticeable absentee from the table, being Karen Ewan. Regrettably, Karen had double-booked and is currently lying on a beach in Dubai, rather than being here. I know she's gutted to have missed Conference but I'm sure we can all accept it, where would we rather be.

Part of Conference this year, we're going to hear from Unity Consultancy Scotland into the work they are doing on behalf of the POA here in Scotland. I'm going to leave it for them to fill you in on what they offer. However, what I can say in the short time we've been working together will be great benefit to our membership in driving forward our agenda. Further to this we're going to put on a presentation from colleagues from the SPS and Reach Advocacy who will be supported by Tracey Clusker, who's the clinical lead for Public Health Scotland, into a trauma-informed and rights-based approach that has been taken by the SPS, as it features heavily in the corporate plan. We believe this will be an excellent opportunity to find out how the SPS got to this model and look at what training and support will be available to our members going forward to help SPS achieve their objectives. It'll also be great to hear from Reach Advocacy, who work closely with members of this union through the Union Learning Platform, offering their expertise and rights-based approach. I hope they actually touch on the feedback from our members into the skills gap and this will highlight to the SPS

the importance of appropriate training for staff. It's too important a matter to simply be a tick-box exercise. We must expect the best training for our members and hopefully you'll find this session informing and helpful, and the session will be concluded with a Q&A session, so we will welcome questions from the floor.

We'll also hear from our new Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Angela Constance. And, like you, I'm keen to hear the plan of Scottish government on how they're going to tackle the crisis the prison estate is facing with the alarming population rise that's currently happening. Also, going to welcome addresses from the following, Steve Gillan, as you will remember due to work commitments was unable to attend last year, so I know he's looking forward to getting back and addressing Conference. We'll also be addressed by our National Chair, Mark Fairhurst, and also a representative from our honorary life members. Staying with the life members, I'll start with an apology. I did say last year that I would make errors and make mistakes, and I done two. I choose who from you would speak on your behalf, and I got you to vacate the room for the end camera. I now know both are wrong so accept my apologies on that and I welcome, as I say, an address from who you choose at some stage tomorrow. I'd also just like to mention when talking about the honorary life members, Tam Adams, who this is going to be his 63rd conference. I think we'd said last night that there's still some motions on the Conference Paper from 63 year ago. I let you decide what ones they were.

I'd also like to welcome both Iain Gray and Iain Florence from the Police Federation, who, like us, have pressures with recruitment and retention and are currently having difficult conversations with their employer around modernisation of a service and the black hole that's existing within budgets. This was worryingly highlighted this week with a stark warning from the Federation that duty staffing numbers have been decimated, that the ability to gather intelligence into terrorist groups has reduced. This should be a concern for us all, and the close relationship forged between POA and the Police Federation is extremely important and one we must continue going forward. Gents, I hope you have an enjoyable Conference.

We also have colleagues across from the Irish POA. Myself and Mark were delighted to attend your Conference last year. Noticeable for me was the media coverage that followed that Conference. It was really powerful and it was well-informed. It was a really nice thing to see, although seeing

Gabriel's face all over the tele wasn't the best. He's not here so I can say that. Also, welcome the two delegates from Northern Ireland, Morris and Ivor. As I say, pleasure of your company the last couple of times we've met. I know the issues that we are facing, you guys are facing as well, so I hope the Conference is enjoyable for you and helps you take things forward that may assist you over there. Conference, I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to Adam and Rachel who are here on behalf of SPS, and repeat what I said last year, that I believe this is a show of respect from both the employer and the union. There's no denying we've had our issues throughout the year, some very much ongoing; however, we continue to work in the spirit of partnership to resolve the issues we have. I can't stress enough the importance that we find having the open dialogue because it does help resolve issues we have in a professional and respective manner. It's not all bad, and I think it'd be remiss not to acknowledge some of the good work that we have. A couple of examples being the introduction of the Menopause Policy, the Dying with Dignity Policy, the change to the 80-mile cap for fuel expense, and arguably for us, this year the biggest achievement was getting people paid their pay increments outwith a pay deal being agreed. We were obviously pushing for that to be permanent, but that's just a few good examples of what and how partnership working could be done. Obviously this the twentieth year of partnership working, something that we're going to be celebrating and highlighting through TUS and I know all involved in making it happen still take pride in the work that was done to bring it in. It's not perfect but it's a far better way of working. At a national level we're in the process of working on a training package with the employer, and sometimes it's good to reinforce the principles of partnership working, especially to new employees who may have had a different way of working to what's set out in the agreement. And if you think you would benefit from that locally, please do it. It's important that we reaffirm the principles. We're also joined by colleagues from the NEC. It's always great to have you here and I hope you have an enjoyable Conference. Sitting from here looking up we see the amount of laptops that's on and the amount of times you are answering your phone and running out the door, so it's very much a working Conference for you, but you are very welcome and I hope you enjoy the social aspect later on.

By no way a reflection on them, the final welcome goes to Thompsons Scotland. The continued work the team have done on behalf of the membership has been tireless, from criminal charges to representing members at IDABS and employment tribunals, we've had some good success stories this year and I thank them on behalf of the membership for the work they do and look forward to continuing working going forward. As Chair of the SNC I want to personally thank them and Phil for all the hard work they do on behalf of the membership. It generally goes unseen from the wider membership, but I know from the hours and the miles, each and every one of the committee do to represent our members, and I thank them. I know this will continue going forward. I think it's important to mention that it goes beyond attending branches. We currently have 112 different working groups that we're represented on. Last year there was 77 grievance appeal panels that you picked up with the guys at that table, and I don't think it should be downplayed the tireless work that they do. Yes, it's a job, not disputing that, but the workload at this time is incredible, so it's important to acknowledge it.

I also would like to welcome the new member of the team, Peggy Purvis, who's settled well into the job. Both Peggy and Kathryn continue to work tirelessly to ensure the high standards are maintained. Welcome Peggy, and thank you to both.

To you, the delegates, like the SNC I'm sure you've a huge increase in your workload, some of your own doing, I must say. You know who you are. But the work you do on behalf of the members is incredible. The small things that you would class as daily tasks, which in reality, make a massive difference to those you support and represent. Your presence within branches is invaluable and sometimes you must wonder is it worth the hassle. The reality is there's something inside us all that make us want to do the job and make us want to try and make a change. So, thank you, and keep up the great representation you offer our members at local level.

To our members, the people we do this for, the environment you currently is easily the most challenging it's been for years. The constant changes that are happening to support the SPS vision, fuelled by the increasing pressures with extra prisoners and galleries, I praise you all for the professionalism in which you carry out your extremely difficult and complex job. It's a credit to

you. I know every delegate and SNC member in this room works tirelessly on your behalf because it's what you deserve.

The current challenges we face... where to begin? Operational lead, the single biggest frustration we have. To know the environment our members work, the fears and anxiety they have when dealing with violent prisoners, prisoners off their heads on psychoactive substances. To know that every shift our members must attend the workplace, there's no option for home working, yet still we're in the same pay scale as non-operational colleagues. It isn't fair. I stood here last year and spoke on this, so to come back without a solution, it genuinely does infuriate me, upset me and does make me angry. I'm not gonna lie. I want our members to know that despite being unable to achieve this yet, we will continue to pursue it, because it's the right thing to do. The latest update is that we've been presented, the TUS and SPS, with a framework that hopefully we can get through that will allow a tendering process to begin for an independent body to come in and look to see how this can be achieved. It's long, it's frustrating but it's important that we get it in. We can't go in a huff because we've failed to achieve it as of yet. Like most things worth fighting for, it takes time, it takes campaigning. We must continue to do this as our membership deserves proper recognition for the complex, dangerous and challenging environment they work in daily and we will continue to fight.

Staff shortages are being faced in every establishment daily. High sick being experienced only adds to this and it places high pressures on those in our workplace. SPS is currently averaging a negative 2% turnover monthly, which may not seem a lot, but coupled with the high sick it clearly becomes evident of the problem we face. One thing I must do here is praise our members at the SPSC, 'cause it's not widely known, but for the past two years they've had to deal with an extra 500 plus recruits. They're complemented to do 270 per year and they've been operating at almost 800 per year on top of all of our training demands. I know, having spoken to a lot of them, it's unsustainable and it's clear that the burnout is coming, but the efforts should be highlighted to Conference. I think it's important.

How do the SPS stop 2% of staff leaving every month? It's a million-dollar question. Perhaps by showing some respect in how they're viewed and by gaining some operational leave might be a start.

Rising prison numbers; there's no hiding place for the justice system. Too many people are being sent to prison. The SPS don't have the staff nor the capacity to continue with the staggering rise in the population. Something must be done. In the latest annual report from His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, she states that we send far too many people to prison. Unfortunately, that's the exact same message from all of our predecessors, so it's important that we hear from government ministers what they're going to do with the information, 'cause that's going to define the future of the prisons in Scotland. Quite frankly, Conference, our members can't continue to cope with ever increasing prisoner population. You'd have noticed we've stepped up our media campaign on this through various news outlets. Phil had done various radio and TV appearances raising the danger over this issue. We'll continue to do so because it's important that we do. Our members have been stuck firmly in the middle of this crisis.

Now, what they want to do to help rehabilitate prisoners they can't do. To help reduce reoffending is simply not possible. The work they want to do to help prisoners with addiction problems is simply not possible. Why is it not possible? It's not possible because all that we're able to do now is warehouse and given basic entitlements to prisoners. The system is failing. It's failing communities, it's failing victims, it's failing families of victims, it's failing prisoners. Something must change and that's the message that the Cabinet Secretary will have to leave this Conference with when she addresses tomorrow.

Increased drugs within prisons – the game of cat and mouse continues. No sooner have we managed to close the entry route by photocopying mail, drones are now being used to transport drugs into prisons. Drugs in prisons are not a new thing but these drugs are particularly dangerous. In years gone by drug taking would then be followed by a period of sleeping it off, however, the drugs they're using now is leading to confrontation, which increases the dangers for our members. We continue to work closely with the Operational Director within SPS in ways to reducing the introduction of these drugs. I cannot go furthermore into that because we've got a motion on it so that'll get spoken about within that motion.

The ongoing disgrace that is GEOAmev. Someone needs to try and explain to me how a private company, paid out of the public purse, can be

allowed to get away with such an appalling service deliver. How can it be right that under pressure establishments need to send our members on escorts to fulfil their contractual obligations? I'm going to say right now I've got nothing but sympathy for local management teams, because I know they don't want to utilise their already depleted staff to carry these out, but they must, and that's what takes me back to my initial comment. Someone needs to explain to me how this is allowed to happen. Is the contract too big for GEOAme; are they paying that poor wages no one wants to work for them? These are the questions that need to be answered because using public money to pay ex gratia for our members to cover contract that public money gives to a private company who cannot deliver the contract. Something needs to change; it's not acceptable. I'd like to say that as both a taxpayer and a trade union official.

You've seen we've mentioned this in our general updates. While we cannot control our members being sent on escorts, we can control the consequence of it. We must restrict regimes, we must ensure the mode of transport has been properly risk assessed and fits with security standards. These are the things we control and we must use them. We'll continue to raise this issue 'cause it's important, it's too important an issue not to.

I'm intentionally leaving Kilmarnock out of my opening address as there's a motion the Paper. But what I'll say is, if the motion's passed, we look forward to welcoming them next year at Conference.

Just to finish off, our chosen charity this year is the Trussell Trust. Thank you so far for the money raised by local branches by selling the envelopes, and for those who have contributed to the feedback, the appeal. I think particular mention must go to the team from Livingston, Kevin and Joe. I don't know if you have seen the stack of stuff that they donated but it's quite impressive so we thank them. I hope everyone can get behind this tonight. It is truly devastating that in 2023 families are having to access food banks in order to feed themselves and their families. So, Conference, let's do our bit to raise as much money as possible for this wonderful charity.

I'll just conclude 'cause I don't want to take up any more time. I hope everyone has an enjoyable Conference.

<Applause>

OK, Conference. Appointment of scrutineers and tellers, going to be Garry McKendrick and Davey Nicholson. Can I have Conference approval? OK, thank you. Jim, can I ask you to go up for the appeals to Conference and Standing Orders Report, please.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference. Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee. I'm pleased to move Standing Orders on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee for Scottish Conference 2023. First thing I would ask delegates to take note of is the start and the finish times, as detailed in the agenda. They are subject to change but as yet there's no planned changes. The voting structure will be the same as previous years, there's a voting card contained in your delegates' pack. On each motion the Chair will rule that the motion is either carried or lost as a show of cards. The rules of debate are covered within the Standing Orders Report detailed in your agenda, and within this report there's also guidance provided to advise delegates of the formal process for raising points of order. It clearly describes the circumstances under which legitimate points of order can be raised in the first instance, and what constitutes a point of order. It also describes the process for challenging the rulings of the Chair. I would ask delegates to abide by the rules of debate.

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee received 107 motions in total. There are four report backs. Conference, Standing Orders Committee rejected 12 motions and suggested eight motions be reworded to the respective branches. Six branches were offered composite over motions and all were accepted. Eight branches were asked for clarification and one of these was withdrawn. Conference, one branch submitted their motions late and intend to appeal to Conference, and on that basis I would ask Polmont to address Conference.

TAM COFFEY – BRANCH CHAIR, POLMONT: Good morning, Chair, good morning, Conference, good morning honorary life members and guests. Our appeal to Conference is for it to hear our position and allow Polmont's motions to be included into this Conference of at least the motions that have not been covered by other establishments. Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge it was my mistake, or as Johnny says, 'IT mistake – idiot Tam', for the motions not arriving on time. Not to minimise my error, I was having issues attaching the files to the email first

time it was ever electronic thing this year, and I wasn't aware of this until the morning of the motions were being heard. At last Conference Polmont submitted no motions, so this year myself and Johnny went out, made an effort to try and rectify that and came back with 11 motions. So, we are aware branches have previously had appeals to Conference to have motions placed and heard by you and that Conference has rejected them. Neither Johnny nor I know of, since we are new to Conference, but we are aware of an appeal to the SNC was rejected because the precedent was set on all similar circumstances being rejected previously. This raises the question of whether this is correct and based on logic. Going by the precedent of any branches ever being successful in appealing the circumstances we can allow our motions to fall under that precedent. The fact is, should be on the merits of each case and for these two reasons. One, there is an appeal mechanism for a reason and that reason is to consider the reasonableness and merits of the case, not be argued to apply precedent. Secondly, when an error is genuine and without question, what reason does this leave you not to uphold our appeal? Conference, can this be right? We accept this clause may disgruntle some branches that might've had their appeals rejected in the past, however, we cannot be held to that decision whatever the motivation or politics of those circumstances. Even if one motion would benefit our members, then this is not the right thing to do to uphold our appeal. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Jim on behalf of Standing Orders.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference. I'm going to ask you to reject the appeal. Timelines were set out and they're quite clear giving specific times. As Tam says, there's already been branches put forward appeals to Conference based on timelines being breached. If we're not going to adhere to the timeline how much longer do you want, another day, week, month. The appeal mechanisms are there for a reason and so we can get the business of the union done, and based on that I'm going to ask you to reject the appeal.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jim. All those in favour of the appeal. All those against. All those in favour. All those against. OK, that's 8/7 in favour, so the motions will be placed on agenda and we'll get them out to you as quick as we can get done 'cause the Standing Orders Committee now have to meet

and will get it out and will add it to the agenda going forward, thank you.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair states the Standing Orders Committee will meet and see where they sit, where they're composite, and the Chair states we'll get back to you on that one and put them in places in the Conference Paper.

Conference, the SNC will not, as a matter of course, be responding to every motion and therefore will not be indicating our position on these motions.

There's fire exits, just be aware of them. There is no testing of fire alarms so if a fire alarm goes off – get out.

Conference, I would ask all delegates to speak to the Chair, use appropriate language and if you could turn off your mobile phones, please. Chair, I will now ask you to formally adopt the Standing Orders.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jim. All those in favour of accepting the Standing Orders Report. Any against? Standing Orders Report is accepted. Thank you.

OK, Conference, we're going to move onto agenda items, starting with Grampian.

Motion 1 - Grampian

SAMMY BARTON – GRAMPIAN: Conference. Motion ones reads: That it should be incumbent upon HR departments that all establishments do detailed payments with enhanced holiday pay. The reason for this is we believe a good number of staff are missing out on this as they are not being made fully aware and are missing these extra funds during this time of austerity and cost of living crisis. This came about because at Grampian, as much as anywhere else, there's a big drive in recruitment. We have a lot of people, a lot of staff shortages, we have operation staff who have been approached to cover shifts at the drop of a hat, extend their hours, do ex gratia without really knowing the policy for enhanced holiday pay. What we would like to see as a branch is the HR departments to drive this. In this day and age you can see what your basic wage is, you can see if you're doing ex gratia, where it falls when you go on leave. Surely there must be some algorithm and pay section where it says, 'This member of staff's coming up to go on leave, they've done this amount

of time over and above their shifts, therefore they will be due the enhanced holiday pay.’ There should be something there to trigger it rather than approaching your first line manager who then in turn sends it to the HR department, who then in turn sends it to pay section before it gets sanctioned. Surely there’s, in this day and age, there must be something out there that can do that and help assist our members to get their rightful pay. Please support the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Sammy. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Shotts, do you wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. The SNC are fully supporting the motion for Grampian. There would appear to be a lack of clear instructions under the current arrangements that the employer has. We believe that any instruction arrangement or process that an employer has in place to facilitate employee entitlements should be clear, consistent and concise. By not having this in place it leads to suspicious perceptions as to the employer’s motivations. So again, the SNC are asking Conference to support this motion from Grampian.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks John. Grampian, right to reply? All those in favour. Any against? Motion’s carried.

Motion 2 – Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Our motion reads: Conference ask that the SNC engage in the talks and action to remove the personal pay point upon completion of the probation for their operation staff. Instead, staff should be moved directly to the next pay point in the pay scale. As a promotion to D, E and upwards is actioned why should operations officers be treated differently after completing their probation? This was an operations officer that put this motion forward and I didn’t quite understand it when it first came on my desk until he explained what had happened to him. He had been in the role, completed his probation, was going onto personal pay point and was a month short of going onto the next pay point going up. Then the following year he would get a pay increase of £46, £56. I don’t know exactly what it was but it was to go to the next pay point because his personal pay point put him just below the pay

point of the next grade above. I couldn’t understand why that was the case but it seems that that is the case and that’s allowed to happen. That means that instead of just making it very simple and moving to the next pay point, we pay people in little pigeon points at certain points of the year depending on when they get recruited. That to me, after reading it there, seems a bit cynical. So, please support the motion, please our new starts to just see their self progressing on a pay progression point as we all know should happen. Please support the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Glenochil. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Shotts. Do you wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks Chair. I know about this motion but we’re comparing probation with promotion and there’s two different things about the apple and pear comparison. Actually, the motion itself ends with a question and it wasn’t until we sat down as an SNC and looked at the question ourself and realised actually we don’t have an explanation for that either as to what the difference is. If Conference carry this motion that’s what we’ll do, we’re going to ask that question, we’ll pursue it and we’ll look to rectify it. We ask you to support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Glenochil, right to reply? All those in favour of the motion please show. Any against? Motion’s carried.

Motion 3 – Shotts.

ALAN STUART – BRANCH SECRETARY, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. SPS Pay Policy states: ‘7.5 Applying a Pay Outcome to Promoted Employees: Progression to the next pay point in the promoted pay band will happen automatically provided the employee has, during the preceding year, worked substantively in their promoted pay band for a period of at least six months, i.e. substantively promoted on or before the 1st of October.’ We contend that this timeframe is unfair, especially during the cost-of-living crisis. Also, that periods of acting up should be taken into consideration, not purely substantive service. We mandate the SNC to negotiate a shorter period, remove the substantive part or remove the rule entirely.

Conference, this issue raises its head every year, although it affects a relatively small number of staff each year. However, it's not part of the policy which treats staff in a fair way. This is a scenario: two officers pass a promotion board at the exact same time and they're encouraged to act up until they get offered a vacant position in an establishment. Officer A is offered the position, takes up the offer and is promoted, Officer B is offered the position, takes up the offer and is promoted. However, it's now after the 1st of October. The following April Officer A moves onto the next pay point but Officer B doesn't. How is this fair when both passed the promotion board at the same time and both were promoted within weeks of each other? Conference, the motion speaks for itself, please support it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Shotts. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont, do you wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. The SNC are asking for a remit on this. We totally agree the sentiments where Shotts is coming from on this one, but it is our duty that when we look at these things that we need to find a safe answer to it that doesn't disadvantage any other group and that's why we're asking for the remit. We take on board the examples and we'd like to discuss those examples with Shotts and see how we can go forward with that. The motion itself is asking for a number of different things and it's not really specific, so putting one or the other things in place, 'cause there's four examples of what we may be able to do; if we were to put one of them in place it may disadvantage other groups and it may lead to other issues like leap-frogging or some other issue. On that basis we'd like to ask for a remit on that.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Shotts, do you accept the remit? Yeah. Conference, do you accept the remit? Remit accepted, thank you.

Motion 4's a composite motion going to be moved by Barlinnie. Inverness. OK, Conference, permission to withdraw motion 4. All those against. OK, motion's withdrawn.

Motion 5 – Barlinnie. Permission to withdraw, Conference. All those against. Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 6 – Dumfries.

JASON HALL – BRANCH CHAIR, DUMFRIES: Chair, Conference. Motion reads: That any future pay negotiations the Scottish National Committee do not accept or put to ballot any deal that has an average across the banding rise, and that every pay progression point that the POA in Scotland represents gets the same percentage rise and there are no non-consolidated parts to any pay deal.

This has just come off the back of previous pay deals we've had, slightly different percentage rises. It's more apparent when you're looking at the difference between D and E bands. If this current pay deal goes in the difference between our C and Ds will be roughly about nine grand and the difference between a D and E is close to five. All we're doing by having different percentage rises across the bands is eroding the difference and it's a less appealing prospect going from a D to an E band. The other part about the non-consolidated, it feels, from our members in Dumfries that the non-consolidated parts that have come in previous years almost feels like they're dangling a carrot to get you take that deal, especially when it gets close to Christmas. I'm asking Conference to support this motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Conference, do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont, do you wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? Greenock.

DON MCGORY - GREENOCK: Asking you to reject the motion. To me the gap between the Cs and Ds is far too big as it is – eight-and-a-half grand. To me, it should be half that. Now, the wording in this motion would just mean that gap would get bigger, and bigger, and bigger. The problem with the gap with is we can hardly recruit staff into a C band position as it is, and even as soon as they're in their bum hardly hits the seat and they're trying to get a D band post. And why would you not when there's a gap of eight-and-a-half grand a year? So, the C band operations groups in every gaol is basically a transient workforce just passing through, which means the most vulnerable place in every gaol you get staff in days, then weeks in charge of movements in and out of the gaol, gates, front of house and all the rest of it. This is only going to make that gap bigger and it's only going to make it harder to recruit and keep staff in their post. If the gap was actually half then maybe

staff would go, 'You know what, see for four grand, you can keep going into the halls, I'll stay where I'm at.' And you get a more settled workforce in your ops group, instead of staff just passing through. So, I'm asking you to reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Any other speakers? Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks Chair. The SNC are asking you to vote against the motion as well. The delegate from Greenock has just captured actually one of the points that we would've been making to you in response to the motion. But there are other parts to this motion that simply mean there's no way we could support the wording in this motion 'cause it talks about, 'The SNC do not accept or put to ballot'. Now, the SNC don't accept any offer on behalf of the membership that does go to ballot. This is asking us not to put it to ballot unless it's completely defined within the parameters of this motion. Colleagues, that's not how pay talks work; that's not how any negotiation works. We go into negotiation with a list of things that we seek to achieve in the negotiation and the employers come to the table with their own list, then we go through the process of trying to get to a position where we exhaust those talks, we get to the full and final offer, then we take it out to the membership. It's where we are, sitting here today, right now; there's a ballot running on in the background to the latest pay discussions that we're going through. We don't have the control or the autonomy to make the decisions on what does and doesn't come out to ballot to the membership. If it's not a good deal the membership will give us that answer in the response to the ballot, but we've got no right to withhold the opportunity for them to give us the response, no matter what that deal looks like.

The last part of it that we'd have to touch on, is about non-consolidated parts. That's been a position for this trade union for a long period of time. We've always said we don't like the non-consolidated element, we think it's a way of holding back and reducing the total value of the pay going forward. We all know, sitting in this room, every single time that non-consolidated offer has been attached to a pay offer, or any other offer, the membership have always willingly voted to accept it. Now, whether we like that or not that's how the decision lies and we should be putting motions in

front of us that take the decision into the hands of the membership and we'd ask you to reject it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Dumfries, right to reply? OK. All those in favour, please show. All those against? Motion's lost.

Motion 7 – Perth.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion's reading: That the Conference mandate the SNC that future pay awards are paid in fixed equal monetary sums applicable to all, rather than in percentage increase.

Colleagues, this motion is about fairness, valuing all employees equally. Percentage pay rises, in the opinion of our branch, are inherently unfair. Why should the majority of our members be valued less than the more senior in the SPS? The current wage gap means that the difference of these increases between our members and governors gives them, the governors, twice as much in monetary terms. That's just not right.

Percentage wage rises have, and will continue, to increase this monetary pay gap. So, going forward if the increase in pay is to be, and probably will be, a percentage, that's how inflation works, then take that figure and divide it equally amongst all our staff. A £1 pay rise for one is a £1 pay rise for all. Support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, do you wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? Jim McCabe for the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference. Going to ask you to reject this motion. On the face of it the idea that we still the money pay gap increasing, again, a set lump sum just isn't true. We have also got to recognise that as a trade union we've got to look after *all* of our workers. Tony's just actually took my thunder on his last motion, our operational group should be respected as well, as long as we're non-operational staff, 'cause the gaols can't function with. So, the Scottish Public Sector Pay Strategy recognises this and it allows more money to be paid at the bottom than at the top. On our last pay deals, here's an example. If we were getting 7% and governors were getting 5% and the Cs and the B bands were getting 8%. If we accept this we accept they'll

never be a closing for our poorer paid workers or C band operational officers will never get to a decent living wage and take them off the breadline. If we accept that everybody gets the same we're now giving the governors a percentage increase more than we give them now. On that basis I'm asking you to reject this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim. Perth, right to reply.

TONY QUINN -DELEGATE, PERTH: Some of what you said there Jim, if everybody is getting the same pay rise then the monetary difference is going to be the same. It doesn't increase for governors. Totally get the point when we're talking about lower paid workers... it's hard to argue against. I'll give you that. But the fact is governors are getting more... people on more money and current day, are going to be getting more and that will continue the longer that we continue in this percentage pay rise way. There's a better way – give everybody the same. If they pay rise on the board or over the board is going to see we're getting 5% and that gets divided amongst us all, governors will get the equivalent or less and more of that 5%... where am I trying to go with this? I'm no good at maths, I'll tell you that. What I do know is a percentage pay rise is going to be more advantageous, sorry, a percentage pay rise, a fixed rate pay rise is going to be more advantageous to people on the lower pay bands than what it will be the governor. They'll be giving up... a 5% for a governor is £10,000. We're not all going to get £10,000 but they might get five and somebody that was getting two might get a wee bit more. I'm just getting all confused here. I do know that it's right, right?

<Laughter>

We are taking from the top and redistributing that more fairly. It won't disadvantage the people on the lower because that sum is already set. Potentially they'll be getting more than the 5% because it'll be taken off of bigger sum. I'm asking you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Tony, and welcome back.

All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Motion's lost.

Motion 8 – Dumfries.

ALISTAIR WILSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DUMFRIES: Morning, Conference. The motion reads: That the Scottish Prison Service and the POA in Scotland are censured for starting pay negotiations two months after the date at which any increase should have been implemented.

It's been a long time since this motion was put forward. I have spoken to Willie about it and he's given us an explanation. However, the branch have asked me to come up and speak on it rather than withdraw it, just to get the answer formally from the SNC as to why the negotiations were held back so long. I ask you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder. Motion falls.

Motion 9 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Morning Chair, morning Conference. Motion 9 reads: That the POAS National Committee acknowledge their failure to conclude pay negotiations on time on an annual basis is unsatisfactory and is viewed as entirely unacceptable by union members.

Most POA reps in this room will have heard these words or something similar from their membership in the last few months. As reps we understand more of the complexities even of pay negotiations that most of our membership, and even after explaining these issues to our members, many of them still feel frustrated with the process. So, this motion, although lacking that understanding, still has validity and it clearly demonstrates a fair part of your membership are unhappy with the current method of process. It's their words when they say unsatisfactory and unacceptable. For that reason we ask Conference to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, do you wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? Barlinnie.

BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair, I ask you to vote against this motion 'cause surely it's incumbent for the SNC to get the best possible deal that's available and putting a time restriction on any kind of negotiations puts that in danger.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Anyone else wish to speak? Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks Chair. Obviously, we are, again, going to ask you to vote against this motion. Barlinnie's touched on the point about us trying to get the best deal possible and that goes without saying, it's a given that that's what we're doing any time we go into those pay negotiations. I think the first thing we can do, as an SNC, is acknowledge and accept the frustration every year that we don't achieve the pay deal within the timeframe that's set and don't get it in place when it's due to be implemented. We acknowledge that, we recognise the frustration that that creates for staff. I think in terms of the motion itself, which talks about this being our failure, I just can't accept that this is our failure. That is a misrepresentation of the process that we're involved in when we get to pay. We don't have absolute control over the start and the stop of these things; we get invited to the table when Scottish government have given a remit to the Scottish Prison Service to engage with us. The easiest fix for, us in all of this, and for the SPS if this becomes an issue that people are going to draw a line and put a flag pole under this, is to present Scottish government pay policy to the membership prior to April each year. Now, had we done that you'd be sitting here looking at a ballot for a 3% pay rise, you'd have been balloting back in April, which is great, but there's no way it was going to be accepted. The process that you're asking us to revisit means us giving up control of some of those conversations and negotiations that we're involved in when we're trying to get the very best deal we can for the membership. Now, sometimes that can be done quicker than it's happened this year. I think, to be fair to the SPS, none of the blame for this lies at their door; they have been sitting waiting the same as us for Scottish government to give them the remit to engage with us. Scottish government were sitting waiting for three months for the budget to be given to them to allow them to distribute the remits to government agencies. So, I'm not pointing the finger anywhere else in relation to this, but to ask us to acknowledge a failure for something we're not in complete control of, we're just not prepared to do that as an SNC. We will engage with the employer at the very first opportunity and we'll state that table until the very last opportunity to get the very best we can out of that conversation. When we've got that we'll bring

it out to ballot, which is what we're doing now. We would ask you to reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Low Moss, right to reply? No. OK, all those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Motion's lost.

Motion 10 – Dumfries. Conference, give permission to withdraw, please show. Any against? Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 11 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, Conference. Motion 11 reads: That pay negotiations are started well in time before the annual April pay rise.

Conference, this motion is born out of frustration more than anything else, and it's clear that a good number of our membership are unhappy with the current process, particularly after enduring what is now a second year of having to wait more than six months to see an increase in their pay. Now, it's right that the SNC should be recognised and applauded in ensuring that our members who are not at the top of the pay scale now receive their increments automatically, but the Low Moss branch clearly feel that more could be achieved. The feeling is that pay negotiations involve more than just increasing staff salaries. There can be any number of aspects tied into a pay deal which, if started earlier and without even knowing what the Scottish government pay budget is, could at least be discussed and possibly agreed in principle, which in turn could help reduce the overall waiting time for POA members. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion's lost. Malky, don't get too comfy.

Motion 12 – Low Moss. Conference, permission to withdraw the motion, please show? Any against? Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 13 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Conference, third time lucky. Motion 13: That this union mandate the SNC in instances where SPS fail to have in place an annual pay aware on its implementation date in April, that should result in appropriate action being taken

against the SPS by the National Committee of the POAS.

This motion comes from the frustration members are feeling over having to wait until the end of the year for two years running now to receive their pay rise. Unfortunately, the proposer hasn't detailed what they mean by appropriate action, but they clearly wish the dissatisfaction noted in some official capacity. Support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Greenock. Wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? Shotts.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference. Speaking in support of this motion actually. For a long time now we have been noticing delays that SPS put in place when they're trying to do pay negotiations and we're trying to set down and get this in time for our staff members, who genuinely have to wait until Christmas when they can get those extra Christmas presents. One of the things that I was looking at for the old school trade unionism was when, if the senior management team decide that they're gonna prevaricate, as they genuinely do, then we should be able to turn round and say, 'We are no longer talking to you about anything else. Close this door and we're not coming out until the pay negotiations are finished.' That's one of the things that we should be doing as a trade union. If they're not wanting to sit down, get this discussed, get it sorted – shut the door and don't let them out until we get it sorted for our members. Please support that.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anybody else wish to speak? Jim McCabe for the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference. On behalf of the SNC asking you to reject the motion. Appropriate action – what is appropriate action? Is it a strike; work to rule; temporary promotions? The bit that gets me is, 'Should result in appropriate action being taken against the SPS by the National Committee of the POAS.' What are you asking for, us to go on strike? You're the membership. The motion's wrongly worded and on that basis, it should be rejected. I ask you to reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim. Malky, right to reply.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Appropriate action doesn't necessarily mean strike action, and I think it's in the word itself, it's appropriate to the circumstances itself. We don't know what those negotiations or any detail so I don't think we should tie that in distinctly with industrial action. However, as I say, appropriate could be any number of things that we are not even aware of just now. I would ask you not to consider that it's just strike action. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Motion's lost.

Motion 14 – Inverness. Conference, looking for permission to withdraw. All those in favour. All those against. Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 15 – composite between Edinburgh and Grampian. Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion reads, and it's in composite with Grampian: Conference mandate the SNC to engage with SPS and seek a substantial increase to the subsistence and allowances paid to staff while covering escorts, given the enormous inflationary increases in costs for food and drink while conducting these escorts.

As was mentioned earlier, GEOAmeY don't seem to be picking up quite a large number of escorts. Our staff are being asked to go out, sometimes with no money or limited opportunity to get something to eat. The cost of that is increasing; I can't remember the last time that over fives and over tens were even increased. All we're asking is to have a look at a possible increase due to the high cost of living. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. As it's composite, Grampian seconder, wish to speak?

CHRIS SINCLAIR - GRAMPIAN: Chair, SNC, delegates. I just want to echo support for the motion. As was said by my colleague, pressures with GEOAmeY, staff were going out on short notice. It's not just a case of snacks and that, sometimes members were going out, no lunch break, giving up their lunch hour and they've got little or no money to get fed, watered. Sometimes

the hospital won't offer biscuits, tea, so it's just general looking after staff and I don't think it's too much to ask to put more money in, 'cause £5 is not enough. I'd ask the Conference to support the motion, please.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Grampian. Anyone else wish to speak on the motion? John Devine for the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. The SNC is asking you to support the motion for Edinburgh and Grampian. I don't think anybody would disagree with what the speakers have said. What we would point out though is that the increase would increase the rate for all T&S/TNS claims, not just covering the escorts. As long as we're aware of that fact we're happy to support that.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Edinburgh, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. Any against? Motion's carried.

Motion 16 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. I was going to withdraw this motion but I want to leave it on the books because, as you know, it's subject to a pay deal just now which may or may not be rejected. The motion reads: That the SNC negotiate with the SPS an increase in the ex gratia rate from its current 1.3 during the week to 1.5 during the week and its 1.6 to double-time at the weekend.

At the moment we always prefer bums on seats, people in-post, but at the moment in all our establishments we're running with a number of people doing extra shifts ex gratia rate. We're looking to get that rate increased to the benefit of these people who are coming in on their own time and helping the establishments stay running safely. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Just before we move on for a seconder, I should've said that if 16 passes 17 would fall. OK. So, do we have a seconder? Glenochil, would you like to speak? Anybody else want to speak? Jim McCabe for the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference, on behalf of the National Committee. We're going to ask Edinburgh to accept a remit on

this. You're tying your hands when you give specific numbers: 1.5, 2% Don't put a target for us. Let us achieve the maximum that we can achieve. And on the basis of allowing us to negotiate and getting the best deal for everybody to put it to the membership, I'm going to ask you to accept a remit, Edinburgh.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Edinburgh, accept the remit? Conference, accept the remit? All show. Any reject the remit? OK, remit accepted, thank you. On that basis 17 can be heard.

Motion 17 – Inverness. Inverness asking for permission to withdraw. Conference, OK with that? Show of hands. Any against. Motion 17 withdrawn.

Motion 18 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES, INVERNESS: Chair, Conference, delegates. What I'm actually instructed, what I've been asked by the members in Inverness to follow the government guidelines and have working hours of 35 hours a week. Now, of course this will depend on the pay deal. However, should the pay deal fail then I would like the 35 hours to be continued. Please support the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Have we got a seconder for the motion? Barlinnie. Wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak. John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. The SNC support the motion for Inverness. The reason being it's consistent with current union policy and it supports motion 57 for 2022 last year. Conference, a 35-hour working week has now been presented to the membership. I'm sure you are all aware of that within the current pay offer from the employer. This was put forward the employer as part of the guidelines and directions from Scottish government. Inverness remind us of those directions in the body of their motion. We understand that reducing to a 35-hour week may not be popular among some members. Others will struggle to understand that point of view of it not being popular. To put the issue into perspective for this Conference, which incidentally is a decision-making body of this democratic union, the SNC move forward with motion 57 from last year to negotiate a 35-hour working week for our

members. So, the SNC move forward with a policy of this union as adopted by Scottish Conference. Over the past year members have continually asked myself and other members of the SNC for an update on this part of union policy, the part, 'A reduction to a 35-hour week'. It would be a change to your contracted hours. It would also require a change to attendance arrangements, so accepting a 35-hour working week would require changes to be made to current attendance patterns. The employers pay offer explains how this would be achieved should the membership accept the offer, again, this is another example of the democratic process.

As stated before, some members and branches have indicated that they don't want a 35-hour working week, a reduction in two hours of their working week, as it would change their current attendance arrangements. The reason it would change those current attendance arrangements is due to the current arrangement's been designed around a 37-hour working week. I'd like to make a clear and fundamental point to Conference. The ACAS Approved Code of Practice Revision 4 that governs attendance arrangements. I'm sure you are all aware of that. This Approved Code of Practice has been in place for over 20 years and some of you will remember when it first was put into place. It actually replaced a national agreement we had for attendance arrangements, and again, some of you will remember Bulletin 8. So, a new Approved Code of Practice removed Bulletin 8.

The current arrangements for attendance has been subject to local negotiation since its introduction all these years ago. Our Assistant General Secretary made reference to this point in a recent circular 17/10. Our current union policy supporters the simple and straightforward principle also that local attendance arrangements should not be subject to a national ballot. Some members had asked in branches, a particular branch was Barlinnie, about why they couldn't put, within the pay offer, the attendance arrangement that they would be working should they accept a 35-hour working week. What we would do, if that was put in place, we'd be subjecting all branches to a ballot on local attendance arrangements, something that we have not accepted. This Conference has never accepted that and it's not a good way to go.

There's a number of reasons for this principle, it being a local attendance arrangement change from a 37 to a 35-hour working week. If the members decide to accept a 35-hour working week the first reason, and it's stated in the Approved Code of

Practice, 'Each establishment has different needs and local branches have the autonomy to negotiate what suits you locally for your members.' And they are the three main reasons for local negotiations. It would be irresponsible if we did not make it clear that a reduction in the working week will have an impact on your current attendance arrangements. A blind man could see that. And, as stated, this may not be popular with some members who wish to maintain their current attendance patterns.

Another point, and it must be made clear to Conference and this must be made clear to our members. Not accepting a 35-hour working week does not protect current attendance arrangements. What other justification would we have to reject a reduction in the working week for the members which would increase the value of the labour of our members, which is current union policy as well. So, we're speaking in support of this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Inverness, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Motion's carried.

Motion 19 – having reviewed last year's Conference paper, motion 74 was almost identical to this, which was lost. Therefore, I'm going to make a rule through the Chair that this motion isn't heard, as I say, because for me it was covered last year.

Motion 20 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES, INVERNESS: Colleagues, Chair, Conference. Motion from Inverness states: That members get paid extra for working festive holidays, as they do in the NHS and other government departments. Please support the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Perth. Wish to speak?

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Here to support the motion, and I'll be brief, I've done my maths if somebody want... I'm not. So, probably the most difficult day from a roster perspective to cover in our rosters is Christmas day. Nobody wants to work it. Nobody. However, there may be the potential for people to volunteer if there's an, I think Inverness mentioned there, ex gratia. It doesn't need to be ex gratia, it could be a different payment, an additional

supplement payment to come in on that one day. People that want to work it and take that are getting an incentive and the vast majority of our memberships are going to get, to most of them, the most important day off in the year for those that have young families. I'm asking you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Anybody else wish to speak on the motion? Grampian.

SAMMY BARTON – GRAMPIAN: I'm asking you to reject this motion because I would like enhanced pay, it's not just for festive holidays, but for all holidays and I think that would be a better remit for the motion. It's not just for Christmas.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Neither's a dog, Sammy. Thanks for that. Any other speakers for the motion? Jim McCabe for the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference, on behalf of the National Committee. I'm going to ask Inverness for a remit on this. Two people's mentioned Christmas. Festive holidays, we have a multicultural membership, whose festivals fall in different times of the year and it's not at Christmas. I'm going to ask them for a remit so that we can actually try to build something with that into the motion. Would you accept a remit?

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Inverness, accept the remit? Conference, do you accept a remit, please show? Any against? OK, remit's accepted.

Motion 21 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 21 reads: This union seek to ensure that ex gratia worked by staff is consolidated into pension calculations.

Conference, it quite explains, ex gratia now makes up part of our members' salary. It's very clear, the salary isn't taxed, what's taxed and subject to national insurance, it's all pensionable. It's a raw deal for our members, which as a union, we should be looking to rectify. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a

seconder for the motion? Glenochil. Do you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I am supporting this motion because for years now we've relied on ex gratia. It came out in an email in 2003, I think, so for 20 years we've been relying on ex gratia to help sustain the SPS, but our members haven't benefited from that other than the payments. But what should that do is bring in the gap between them going out on their pension and that whole period. So, if they are to add that extra payment into their pension that is done through ex gratia then the pensionable payments would've come to fruition earlier and some of the issues that we've got, as far as people having to retire with less pension pot, would've been resolved. So, I think it's only right that if you work the ex gratia, it should be attributable to your pension. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Any other speakers? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. The SNC are asking you to reject the motion from Low Moss. The simple reason being is that ex gratia payments are not considered to be part of pensionable pay within the current pension scheme rules. We understand fully the sentiment at the heart of the motion. However, to seek to ensure that it is pensionable is not a viable option under the current pension scheme rules. What we can do is look to see what criteria must be met before any benefits become pensionable and then try and find a solution around the issue through that angle, round another way. This may require a move away from ex gratia and adopt a different approach to when staff work over and above their contracted hours, so it may require a different mandate to Conference. What we must also bring to mind is that we have, in the past, Conference has rejected any move to additional contracted hours, so it leaves us maybe going down the road of a defined overtime or something down that way. Under the current union policy the additional contract to hours wouldn't be an option. But to say to Conference that this motion, in its current wording, is worth supporting and pursuing under the current circumstances, it would be unreasonable and disingenuous and it's on that basis, Conference, we're asking you to reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Low Moss, right to reply? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Motion's lost.

Conference, we're going to move a wee bit off agenda at the moment, just purely to do with the Standing Orders Committee are going to have meet to place Polmont's agenda items on. So, what we're going to do prior to breaking for lunch, which is still going to be 1:15, but I'm going to invite up Neil Findlay and Michael Sharpe from Unity Consultancy to give you what they're all about and how they're going to support us and what they're going to offer us. After that we'll have our break and we will reconvene back for 2:30 for the presentation between SPS and REACH Advocacy. But, as I say, lunch still won't be until 1:15.

NEIL FINDLAY – UNITY CONSULTING: Good morning, Conference, thanks very much. It's a great pleasure to be here and speak to you this morning just for a few minutes about Unity Consulting Scotland. We are a public affairs company, we're a not for profit social enterprise, we believe we put the public interest at the heart of everything that we do and the work that we do, and I'll explain that in a moment. We've recently been engaged by the Prison Officers Association to work with the union providing a range of support services. It's very early stages but we're beginning to work with the union and we will certainly be working with the union after Conference.

What we do is we provide a range of services aimed at trade unions, community groups and charities in the voluntary sector. We do not do any commercial work. We're not interested in doing commercial work. We're not in the business that we are to make money – if we were going to make money we would go and do something else. We're in it because this is where our heart is, we're all steeped in the Trade Union Movement, we believe in it and we want to make a difference in that way. So, we provide paid for services to different trade unions and organisations that allows us to also provide the same services to small organisations that have no budget or very limited budget and we will provide that service, either free or for a very, very significantly discounted rate.

What we do is we provide a range of different services. We do a lot of research, we publish reports. Some of you may yesterday have seen the media; the major report published yesterday by the Fire Brigades Union on the state of the fire service

that was all over every media outlet yesterday. That was us that researched that and published that for the union. We do a lot of social media work so if you see videos or graphics or different stuff popping up on your social media feeds, some of that from the trade unions will come from us. We do a lot of media work in terms of communications, press releases, liaising with journalists, making sure that stories for the different unions get in the papers, so particularly around campaigns and we do a lot of campaigning advice and strategy discussions with trade unions.

There's three of us involved, my colleague, Michael, here and the third person, Tommy, is sunning himself in Sicily at the moment. Tommy has got a PhD, he's a researcher on social policy, he's worked in the Scottish and UK parliaments and he is very good at research skills that we think we can bring to the table for you. Michael has a background in policy development and campaign planning and strategy; he's also our social media guru. And myself, I was a former member of the Scottish Parliament. I understand local politics and national politics. I've got a wide range of contacts across all the political parties and in the Scottish media. All of us have been involved in campaigns all our lives.

When we were setting up a few years back we wanted to give a better voice to those who are often elbowed out of the way in Scottish public life. Working in the Scottish Parliament you often see the business community in there, the financial institutions, they've got lobbyists in there getting their say, making sure policy is developed in favour of them. And often it is just simply because of capacity trade unions, community groups, charities that are elbowed out of the way and we wanted to address that balance a bit. We want to help drive progressive change in Scotland and challenge some of the very powerful interests that are at play in Scotland who dominate our society and economy in their interests, and I would argue not the interests of working people and that's who we want to help. And we support those who are working to bring about a more just and tolerant and fair society.

One of the things we always do is publish the clients that we work with. We are open and transparent about this; it's always on our website. We comply with any regulatory demands. Some of the organisations who are involved in this sector are very secretive about who they work for, and once you find out who they work for, no wonder they're secretive. We don't go down that route; we always

publish who we work for. Some of the examples of what we do: we have done things like all-member surveys for the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union. We did a major survey of their members on the cost-of-living crisis. We did one on food insecurity for them, which was shocking, and it showed that the people who kept us fed during the COVID pandemic themselves were going home to empty fridges and empty cupboards. Absolutely shocking state of affairs.

We managed to bring the four rail unions together to produce a vision for Scotland's railways, which the railways were going back into public ownership. The Scottish government didn't have any sort of vision for what that would look like so the unions decided to publish their vision with a set of key demands on it. I have to say, a number of those demands are now being implemented, so if any of you travel by rail you'll see, for example, that peak fares have been abolished for a six-month period as a trial. That was because of the rail unions campaigning because of that document that we produced. And there's a whole number of other things. They wanted a trade unionist on the board of ScotRail – they've got a trade unionist on the board of ScotRail. So, there's things like that that they have achieved out of that document.

We organised the biggest demonstration of postal workers and fire fighters ever at the Scottish Parliament, and actually tomorrow there is another major rally of fire fighters at the parliament because of the budget crisis that the service is in. They've got a flat cash budget settlement, pretty much like the Prison Service has, so it may be something that we can discuss further in future. We've conducted a major report for Wheatley Housing in Glasgow on universal credit and its impact on their tenants, which is pretty dreadful. We supported one of the members in Scottish parliament to introduce a Members Bill on the Standards of Insulation and Environmental Sustainability in Housing, and that will now become law. We worked extensively with ASLEF during their pay dispute, and they won a significant pay increase and we handled all of the media in Scotland for that, which was a very intense time. We also worked in England on the Independent Assessment Commission; we handled the media for that which is looking at changing the school exam system in England. And we've helped arrange many events for organisations like the CWU, the FBU, PCS, Zero Hours Justice which campaigns to end the use of zero hours contracts, Who Cares? Scotland to campaign on behalf of looked after children and a whole number of

organisations that we work with. We also work with Justice for Columbia, an NGO that supports the peace process in Columbia. Our pro bono or reduced rate work, we work with a couple of local credit unions and we provide services to them for free. We also work with Scottish Hazards which is a trade union campaign in relation to health and safety.

The way in which we want to work is always the same, whichever organisation it is that we're engaged with. We will always be led by what the priorities of you are. We don't freelance, we don't go and say, 'Right, this is to be done or that's to be done.' It's set by the union; we work up an agreement. We have had a good session with the Executive team, first session; we need to go back now once your Conference is over and do a campaign plan for the coming 6 or 12 months and then we revisit that regularly to ensure that we're keeping up with the things we've said we've done. We will never put any media out or social media or comment out that is not signed off by the union – it's the union that's in control, it's not us. We always build in regular meetings and liaison meetings with the organisations we work with and we have a periodic review of our work to make sure that we are doing what we said we would do, and we always provide regular updates for executive teams for the General Secretary or for anybody who really needs it.

At the moment we're working with the Bakers Union, PCS, ASLEF, Unite, we work with the Fire Brigades Union, CWU, RMT, TSSA and others. We hope that this is the start of a long relationship with yourselves; there are a number of issues that came out of the first meeting that we had that we see as being key campaigning issues for yourself. Looking through the Conference Agenda there are many more coming forward. So, on issues around pay and staffing levels, recruitment, pensions, and the pension age, I know, is a particular issue. Obviously, there's issues around the Prison Estate and overcrowding, training, the budget, issues around health, safety and wellbeing, drugs and organised crime. I think there's plenty to be getting on with. So, we are really excited to be supporting another trade union in Scotland. We look forward to developing a work plan with the team and no doubt some of that will come from the motions that'll be passed at the Conference today.

Phil, John, I'll hand back to you. If anybody's got any questions, we're more than happy to take any from you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Neil. Conference, I hope what you have heard there you have picked up why we feel it's important to get these guys, three of them, on board. The success stories that is already out there and live, the big one for me, having read the document on the railways and seen the outputs that are already coming, it's what can happen with the right people helping out. So, we welcome having you on board. The early engagement that we've had with you, and the feedback from it, again, is something that fills us with confidence going forward because it is everything that you've just said. It's not a sales pitch because we've had the meeting and we're already going through it, so it's very welcomed. And as you said, there is items on this agenda that will lead to the direction where we're going to be going over the next 12 months. So, we're looking forward to working along with you, absolutely.

Is there anybody with anything from the floor who would like to ask? John.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: My Local council when they're trying to close care homes. My mother's in a care home and she was there, the communication with the NHS staff and the other unions that were standing there, actually we were successful in the campaign. As you know, I was quite vocal upstairs as well, and we got our point across and they were heard. So, what they're actually putting on the table and offering as well what that there, they'll support you and they'll get things done. So, thank you from me and for the care homes that we helped save, thank you.

NEIL FINDLAY – UNITY CONSULTING: Yeah, thanks. I mean that was a really interesting and good example. I'm involved, and Tommy, who's not here, both of us are from West Lothian. Michael's from bandit country in North Lancashire. We're involved in the West Lothian Trade Union Council as volunteers, that's just who we are. And when the council announced the care homes were going to close we approached the trade unions and said, 'Look, we're willing to help.' And we were on to help with volunteer time. But, the unions had limited capacity to fight that campaign so they came together, Unite, Unison and the GMB to fight a campaign against the closure of those care homes for elderly and disabled people. So, we put in some of our time voluntary and we offered them a significantly reduced rate to help in that campaign, and we won. None of those care homes are now being privatised. None of them are closing.

That is, I think, a good example of the capacity that we can bring.

The reason we set this up in the first place is when I was in parliament, I saw trade unions coming in and out the parliament, but with the best will in the world because of the size of unions in Scotland, particularly smaller unions, their capacity is limited. It just is because of the numbers, it's as simple as that. So, therefore we were always saying to them, 'You need to come together and get some people with sharp elbows that are in there in that parliament and fighting on your behalf.' And they all said, 'That's a great idea', but nobody done it, so we've done it. That's really where it came from. And I think it's starting to bear fruit. You'll probably see stories in the media, most weeks, that have come through us but you wouldn't know it's through us, and that's the way it should be because it should come from the organisation. We plant stories, we place stories, we speak to journalists, we get stuff out on social media almost every week to ensure that the people we are working for are keeping the campaigns that they are running in the public eye and that's the way we would expect it to continue. But, as I say, the emphasis being on we do nothing freelance, it's always signed off by the people we work for.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Neil, in getting praise holds way much weight than you think!

NEIL FINDLAY – UNITY CONSULTING: It'll no last.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Anyone else got anything to put to Neil or Michael? No, so listen, thank you and genuinely look forward to continued work, alright? Thanks a lot.

NEIL FINDLAY – UNITY CONSULTING: Cheers

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, I said just prior to them coming up we'll stop now, as I say, allow Standing Orders the opportunity to go and do what they want to do. Lunch won't open until 1:15 and if everyone can be back in for 2:30 please. Thank you.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Polmont's motions, first one going on, 83 and it's a composite

motion with Shotts. The second one is a composite motion with Perth and that'll be on motion 50. Then we have 57a, 57b and 57.3, for three of Polmont's motions. Again, mark down 91b and 84a, put them in your ...

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: I've lost the will now!

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: OK, Conference, so as we explained at the start of my opening speech, we've brought along SPS and an organisation that we've worked with closely as a trade union, Reach Advocacy, and it's all centred roundabout the approach that SPS are taking Corporate Plan being trauma-based, rights-based etc. We've set aside 20 minutes for both to take part, so it'll be 20 minutes. At the end of the 20 minutes we'll invite questions from the floor. No questions about pay, alright, to the SPS. It's purely about this trauma stuff and I did tell them I'd make that promise before we started.

We have Sue Brookes, we have Dr Anna Mac Kenzie and we have Lee Currie, who are going to come up first of all and do a bit for SPS.

SUE BROOKES – SPS INTERIM DIRECTOR: Thanks very much. Can you all hear me OK at the back. OK, great. Thanks very much for the invitation to come and speak to you today. It's lovely, apart from anything else, to see some well-kenned faces. And I really appreciate being able to talk to you about this subject 'cause it's one that's just really important to me, I think it's a really important issue for the service going forward. What I'm going to do, I'm going to do a very brief overview and then Anna's going to talk about what we're doing about training and Lee's going to talk about some health and wellbeing issues. Before we do that, we're going to play a short video for five minutes, and this video has been used at the part of leadership training, so some of you may have seen this already because I think some PLRs and SNC came to a recent training event. It just captures a little bit about what trauma-informed practice is about. If the gentleman at the back of the room could play the video for me, I'd be very grateful.

<Video plays>

Thanks, if we just stop the video. OK, so it's a really simple for those of you who've been working

with folk in our care for many years, it might seem a bit simplistic because the very best staff in SPS really do those kind of relationships all the time. What we do need is to try and get some kind of consistent corporate approach to how we do things and that's partly because we need to focus on our own staff's welfare. Because, as the video showed, in this room at any given time you don't know how many of us may have experienced trauma ourselves, either in our personal lives or in our professional lives. And we also need to make sure that our practice is safe and appropriate and based on the right kind of evidence. What we're not doing, we're not talking about becoming a trauma-informed organisation to get some kind of badge or to be able to say, 'Well, this is what we do as an organisation.' There is no point in doing this unless we do it properly and we really take account of what best practice is.

This slide, it's too small to read unfortunately from the distance that you're at, but essentially what it say is, 'If you've experienced trauma, particularly trauma in childhood and then that's repeated as a young adult, you're much more likely to have mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, and unfortunately, to end up hurting yourself or ultimately to complete suicide.' And whilst, again, intuitively we know that, my experience in working as the governor in Polmont is that not all staff, because we've not done that, really understand the importance of things like child development and how specifically trauma can affect how your brain develops as a child and the way in which that can make your behaviour very distressed at times and what might trigger that. Eddie and the others can speak for themselves, but I think just having that knowledge was really important for the staff in Polmont.

The other thing I think I should just mention, I want to plant the seed and let you have a think about it, is that we have 8,000 people in prison – they're nearly all men. Nearly all men. We've spent a lot of time talking about gender-specific and trauma-informed work for women, but maybe it's time we started to think about what makes that experience, particularly of childhood trauma and specifically of domestic abuse, what might make that experience different for little boys and why do so many of them end up then go on to perpetrate violence or sexual violence against women and children but in perpetuating that cycle of difficulties. I'm just putting that out there as something to maybe think about.

We've talked about having a corporate approach, the video talked very much about relationships. Our Corporate Plan contains this purpose statement, it talks about what we do being person-centred, inclusive, trauma-informed and rights-based and we've got two or three key objectives. Two of them very specifically we need to weave trauma-informed approaches into, particularly into health and wellbeing approaches, but also into our case management approaches and there's going to be work on that coming forward. And if you read the Corporate Plan, particularly Teresa's introduction, you will see that she majors on the importance of relationships in the organisation. And if you know Teresa well, as I'm sure many of you do, you will know that she genuinely believes that the relationship between prison staff and people in our care is the critical factor. If that works well, everything works well; if it doesn't work well, then we've really got problems and difficulties.

So, we do have a delivery group looking at what the POA are represented on that group, so you're very much involved at that kind of strategic level. And the trauma-informed approach really feeds through everything. It's not a one-off project. What we're saying is you have to be trauma-informed in everything we do. So, in the work we're doing on deaths in custody, on restraint, on gender identity, all of these things now have to be trauma-informed.

So, what we've been doing is, because I'm clearly not an expert in this; I'm not a practitioner in being trauma-informed. We started by getting together with people largely from the NHS and Scottish government, who are experts in trauma-informed practice, and one particular clinical psychologist who's been working with Edinburgh prison a lot. So, if you're from Edinburgh... I don't know where Edinburgh is, but if you're from Edinburgh you'll maybe know more about this than I do. The advice that they gave us was, 'Do not just put out lots and lots of training for staff, because if you don't have the right infrastructure and your senior leaders aren't bought into this and the managers in establishments don't understand it, it will feel.' And actually there've been reports produced from England and Wales where they have kind of majored on rolling out lots of training and it's not been successful. So, we're not doing that, we're taking a slow, gradual approach based on the evidence, and Anna will talk to you a bit about how we've undertaken the leadership training and how you've been involved in that.

What we are doing, as I said, it's really important to get a good evidence base so we need to understand what does the evidence tell us about how to do this journey successfully, but also, where are we now as an organisation, how trauma-informed do we think we actually are at the minute? Because quite a lot of the things that we do well actually are trauma-informed, we just don't really know that, we don't know how to explain that. So, we have a clinical psychology PhD student who's undertaken a literature review for us, we are developing our evidence base following the training by interviews with senior leaders and we're commissioning research so that we can understand what the evidence tells us about what to do next. In terms of governance processes we're going to audit the organisation, so not just at establishment level but also organisational level against a series of quality indicators which Scottish government have produced. Basically it allows us to decide where are we on a scale of 0-10; are we a trauma-informed organisation or are we not and where do we need to improve? Over time we'll probably produce an organisational framework and then a strategy document which will guide people and we'll want to try and create networks of support across establishments. So, it might be, for example, that maybe the health and wellbeing first line managers that have just been put in place across establishments might get a little bit of enhanced training in this area so that they can support and coach others. We don't know yet.

The one really critical thing that we must do for trauma-informed practice is we must put in place the opportunity for staff to have time away from those in our care to be able to do some kind of supervisory practice. Now, I've called it on the slide supervisory practice. Social work do that, the third sector do that, different organisations call it different things, some call it reflective practice or professional practice, but essentially it's an opportunity for people to get together and to look at the people that they're working with and to discuss whether they're doing that well and how they could improve. That is a critical component of trauma-informed practice. And you will know at the minute that the way in which we deploy staff in establishments doesn't allow us to do that. Now, we've got a long way to go to think about how we might do that, how we might best support it, what the role of first line managers might be, do we need psychology to support that or social work or somebody else and we will engage with you actively to try and understand how that can best be

achieved. But you cannot do trauma-informed practice without that kind of supervisor support in place.

I think that's where I finish off. Anna, I'll just handover to you to cover some of the training stuff.

ANNA MACKENZIE – SPS HEAD OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT: Good afternoon everyone, it's a pleasure to be here to be able to talk you through what we've done so far and our early plans for the embedding of trauma-informed training throughout the organisation. Now, as Sue has already referenced, this is a long-term plan, five-to-ten-years is the timescale for being fully trauma-informed, particularly around the training that we've planned so far, and particularly in my area of the organisation. I'm acutely aware that for all of you training is really a luxury at the moment with regards to staffing and sickness levels, so we want to take this slowly and ensure that we're embedding it correctly and in a way that reflects the challenges throughout the establishments. So, what we've done so far and what I'd like to say as an introduction is that, and Sue referenced this as well, we are building on your staff practices and expertise already. This is not a case of re-training them in a new way of doing things, we have done early trauma training with staff, some amount of staff in the women and the youth estate, and what we've learnt very clearly from that is that staff are already doing trauma-informed support in practise throughout the organisation and you have some excellent staff throughout the organisation.

The research in the area of trauma, and particularly childhood trauma, has progressed a huge amount in the past five-to-ten-years, which I know maybe sounds like a long time, but in the world of research it really isn't. What we want to do is harness that and bring it to our staff in the organisation to really bolster and give them a little bit of theory and a little bit more practice behind what they already do. So, we're using the NHS framework. This really is the most proven and the most research framework for trauma-informed practice that is used by, not just NHS obviously, but a lot of organisations throughout the UK. We've been working in partnership with them, even in the early stages, and they're extremely supportive.

What we did from an L&D point of view was, again, the NHS did a very early high level mapping exercise that included the Prison Service and that was really helpful as an early indication but we feel

that it needed more detail. There's a lot of nuance and there's a lot more skill in a lot of the jobs, particularly on the front line in SPS, that really will take more than just the early introductory levels of trauma training. So, what we've done internally is we've done a staff mapping exercise with staff at Polmont, who had already done some trauma training, and some of the staff who didn't. We have also done a more in-depth research and mapping exercise with a lot of the staff in HMP Edinburgh and some of the data from that is still coming in. At Shotts we've done pilot training with the industry staff, just in the introductory to trauma-informed practice, and we're getting some feedback from them as well that we're still collating.

What we've found is that generally the operational staff sit within the first level and up to the third level. There's four levels in trauma-informed practice. What we really believe, as a Prison Service, is that we want to work with our NHS partners and get some bespoke training designed in the future for the majority of operational staff, because it doesn't sit neatly in one category over the other. Someone who is a new recruit who's gone into the ops staff group is arguably going to need less detailed trauma-training than say a programmes officer who has a lot of interaction with traumatised individuals every day and has to deal with some of that residual trauma themselves. So, what we've done, as Sue alluded to, it's very much about instilling this from senior levels down the way, because if we don't all buy into it, every single level, then it's very, very difficult for this to be embedded. I think really what we've done sometimes in the past is we've looked at the larger staff groups, trained them and relied on them to bring about this practical and cultural change. That really is not going to work if your management are not speaking the same language and trying to embed it as well.

So, along with our NHS partner leads, that Sue mentioned, we have done four two-day STILT, which is Scottish Trauma-Informed Leadership Training. I'm glad I remembered that. We have done that with senior leaders throughout the SPS and with a selection of TUS partners as well. The next stage of that is to work with those NHS leads to adapt it so that we can roll it out to senior leader teams in every single establishment. It takes a lot of NHS input so we need to find a way to adapt it that we can use it more flexibly without having to constantly take their time as well because they are very short staffed. That's that next part of the

training is to roll it out to establishment senior management teams.

What we've also done in the meantime is I have been getting a lot of requests, actually for the past couple of years, from establishments who are really interested in trauma-informed training for their staff, which is great to hear, but we also wanted to make sure that we were taking a unified approach and also that establishments were using NHS resources and NHS framework so it complemented what we were bringing in. What NES, who are the education section for NHS, for anyone who didn't know, is they have agreed a module sharing agreement with us, which was very kind of them, and we have uploaded the first three introductory modules onto our Moodle site, Milo. Now, these are optional at this point, they are there for establishments, for staff members, for teams, for managers to use if they feel that they want to go and engage in something. And, as I said, I do understand that that's an absolutely luxury at the moment with staffing issues, but what we want to use Milo for more in the future is that there is a page on every area of training for establishments to be able to access. We have staffing challenges just as much as everywhere else in the organisation and we realise that when establishments want to deliver training, we aren't always available. So, if we have approved and quality assured areas of training that you can access on our digital platform then it should make it more flexible for establishments to be able to get hold of that. We're currently in talks to add three more modules to that list and these will focus on staff wellbeing and psychological first aid and I'll be putting out a staff notice to establishments and governors when that eventually happens and people will be able to access that as well.

What we've been doing as well in the meantime, as Sue alluded to, is we've started doing initial changes to training. So, during the work that we did with the launch of HMP Stirling and the community custody units, we had a real focus on trauma-informed training for staff and we collated some feedback at that stage. We've also done that with individuals, staff who are working in the youth estate, and again, we've collected some data on how effective that's been just in the short term. We've started embedding a trauma-informed session into recruit training for both operations and residential, and also we've started, when we're reviewing all of the training sessions that we look after at the college, doing it with a trauma-informed lens. For example, when we reviewed the searching

and updated it, we made sure that we put in elements of trauma-informed training into that. And, of course, as Sue said the rollout of Control and Restraint 2, which has already been rolled out into Stirling and Polmont, and Low Moss is the next establishment that we're going to be piloting that in. Again, that is a very trauma-informed approach. So we've got these really initial early changes that will link into this longer-term plan of five-to-ten-years.

So, I'm going to pass over to Lee now and he's going to tell you a little bit more about what we're doing to support staff through this.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Colleagues, just before Lee gets up, that's two interruptions with phones. Can I remind you Jim's Standing Orders request that all phones are turned off through Conference, please. Thank you.

LEE CURRIE – SPS HR BUSINESS PARTNER: First of all, thank you, Conference, for inviting me along today. I suppose first and foremost, what Sue has alluded to, and Anna, I want to make across the point that we can't do things by halves. I think that's a really, really important point to get across. It's one thing to have a trauma-informed approach but you've also got to recognise the potential for rub off in that, be it primary trauma or secondary trauma. Now, we carry that away from what we know: 35% of absence is mental health related; over 50% of referrals to occupational health are mental health related, and we know that there's a fair amount of people in custody who've been impacted by four or more adverse childhood experiences. That gives you an idea of the environment. That's as well as the job role itself and that threat, I suppose, that you could be assaulted in the context of your role on a daily basis. That's why, when it comes to staff support, trauma support in particular is multifaceted, it requires organisational understanding and it also requires a commitment at all levels within the organisation.

We've been working hard on a number of areas. I know up the back you might struggle to see some of his, but just getting across the point, in terms of staff support we've introduced a number of apps, desktop support, we've got a new EAP platform available to the staff group, we've redeveloped a health and wellbeing SharePoint site, we've got a spare room now and it's got multiple areas like trauma that you can click on and it takes you to sources of support. We've got the Shout Protect

Support Service available to all staff and also we promote very heavily the work of the charity for civil servants, have a number of really, really useful materials: sleep apps, stress app, support with finance etc. that's available. In terms of policy and process work, we reviewed the pre-employment screening process to include sections on trauma. That was particularly important with the D Band recruitment in particular, where you were bringing in direct entrant Ds; we wanted to make sure people, if they had a background, a trauma history, then we needed to know about that so we weren't placing people in the wrong places. We're currently in the process of reviewing the Critical Incident Response. The reason for doing so is there was a change in these guidelines in 2018 and our current process didn't meet that criteria. So, we brought in an interim process in partnership with Occupational Health, and initial feedback's been fairly positive from Shotts. With that, it's also led to a literature review into best practice in the area. We've also been engaged with a number of emergency responders to look at what they provide and we've also just started an internal staff consultancy. So, probably the turn of the year next year we'll start to put proposals forward in terms of a new model; we're very much liking what Fire Brigade Scotland right now are doing and we're working very closely with them.

Our Wellbeing Policy, we've just updated that. We've now got sections on violence and aggression, domestic abuse, we've also got sections on bereavement and further support of that nature. Then our attendance management policy, it's under review just now, there's a draft sat with the union, but we were audited in late 2022 with the outcome fed back in 2023 and there's going to be line manager training now rolled out with the new version of the policy and they'll be bespoke sections on trauma and mental health support. Self-care and resilience, I suppose the big soundbites were working very closely with an organisation called Lifeline Scotland. They provide support with regards to all things self-care and resilience to emergency services and we're looking at how the Scottish Prison Service can become involved with that as well. We putting together a paper to go to the Executive Management Group at this point in time.

In terms of business information, it's about keeping your finger on the pulse. So, from our point of view, we have regular case trackers, regular reporting, we do a lot of external comparison work, both within the UK and Ireland, as well as wide

Europe now. And, as I say, we're still looking at things like staff survey outcomes in our Occupational Health User Interface Group for feedback on what's happening out there and what best practice is and how we can implement that in your organisation.

In terms of connection, I suppose you'll not know what's happening unless you're at the coal face and that's why a big part of what we're doing, particularly like the critical incident response now is getting out; we've put out forms and questions going out to union members as well, PLRs asking about the process, what you liked about the process. Because we know it isn't just about reinventing the wheel, there's good practice out there but it's also looking at what we done well before and trying to build on that rather than just saying forget about that and move onto the next one.

Lastly, in terms of professional support, I think also just to let you know in terms of connections we've got different custody tasking groups that I'm involved in, trauma-informed delivery group, health and safety committee, we're working with EuroPris. There's a lot of work going on in that area to find out what others are doing and what we can learn from. In terms of professional help, this is the one big takeaway, is the signposting support. I think we were looking at EAP, in the last 12 months 266 members of staff have contacted EAP – that's just under 6% of our staff group who are accessing it. You heard me mention at the beginning there 35% of your staff are off daily with mental health issues so that's suggesting people are not coming forward. So, it's very, very important that the people in this room are aware of what we have to offer, and if you're not familiar, you now know a face, come and speak to me and I'll try and take that forward from there.

In terms of the support we do have, we have EAP, we've got six-weekly virtual mental health clinics, we've got BBV sharps helplines, we've got physio support, we've got trauma helplines so there's a number of different things there, do come and speak to us. I mentioned there 'Tis but a scratch'. For those that are familiar with Monty Python maybe remember the Holy Grail and the knight who gets his arms and his legs cut off and he's still looking to pick a fight and move forward, keep soldiering on. I think it's important you look at that in terms of your colleagues and remember when it comes to peer support, we want to bring people forward, we want people to utilise these services, that's why we make them available, that's why we

want to build on them. In terms of going forward we want to create resilience muscle memory, it goes beyond. When it comes to things like critical incidents there's a pre-element about self-care and resilience and give people the armour and the protection that they carry with them throughout the job. It's also the live incident, you create that knowledge base of what to do under a live event, how you respond to that live event, who should be there to support you, where you access support as and when you need it. And then it's that post-incident, what happens when you're invited to a fatal accident inquiry or years down the line, does that open up an old wound and is someone going to come and recognise that you may be struggling with that and signpost and point you in the right direction. So, in terms of self-care and resilience, the big focus will be building on what we have. Sue also touched on supervision and reflective practice, that potentially will be a new world.

In terms of continuous review, I think it's really important that it's data led action, we look at what our data's telling us and then we work to focus in on problem areas. Then in terms of the implementation side of things it's about our policy, practices, processes, looking at them through a trauma-informed lens and then the outputs of that then looking at that we can provide to support. And lastly, it's about raising awareness, it's about signposting that support. I've put there a kind of Jenga picture – I don't know if you're familiar with the game? We're using it as a metaphor for a prison officer. Basically we need a strong foundation, that self-care and that resilience to stop people wobbling, but fundamentally when you take a block out, we need to be thinking about putting something back in and that's really where our big push is when it comes to this trauma-informed work. So, I just want to give you that assurance today that this isn't a one-sided thing, it isn't just looking in one direction in terms of how we can make a difference in delivering our services, it's also about considering the impact of that, be that primary trauma or secondary trauma.

I think that's it from myself. I don't know if we take questions?

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: No, thanks for that, Lee. And here was Sue and Anna saying that you'd have taken long. No, we're going to hold questions to the end, so if I can ask you to step down and I'll invite up Tara Singleton and Dilan Kaya from Reach Advocacy, who will now do their bit, and then we'll go to

Q&A. Feel free when you are not speaking to take your seats up, alright?

DILAN KAYA – REACH ADVOCACY: Hi everyone, thank you for inviting us here today. My name is Dilan and this is my colleague, Tara, we're both human rights educators for Reach Advocacy. Our colleague, Jed Brady, is at the back, he'll be doing the Q&A. I just want to start off by talking about who Reach are; the founding of Reach is a reflection of how our colleagues were dealing with substance use and the difficulty of trying to navigate services and seek justice. So, the way they went about of trying to fix this was to understand human rights and how to educate themselves.

The founding of Reach is basically using education as a tool of empowerment to teach individuals what human rights are, how to have a human rights-based approach in their workplace and in their personal lives, and to basically use this, not just in substance use, but for all areas, for example, domestic violence, if you're a social worker, etc. Essentially human rights is for everyone and it's important for each individual to know this. I'll go onto what we offer, so we have our one-day workshop which covers medically assisted treatment, but also talking about the human rights aspect to legislations and toolkits. We have our accredited training which runs over three months, so the teaching is longer, it does essentially have the material from the workshop, but it's SQA approved and each participant is assigned a tutor for their written work. It covers the human rights-based approach which we'll get into later, and trauma-informed, which was the presentation earlier, as well as a person-centred approach.

What our one-day workshop covers is the social contexts about health inequality, so we have statistics, we have legal reports, we have reports from the UN talking about how health inequalities are how they were, for example, back in 2000 and how they are now and we use a comparison tool to see how well or not well we've been doing. We talk about the Human Rights Legislation, so we have the international law, the more regional laws and our domestic law, which is the Human Rights Act and the Equalities Act. We've got identifying duty bearers and rights holders, so this is the importance of knowing human rights but how to use them in your professional lives and how individuals can use them in their personal lives. Educational tools that apply a human rights-based approach, so we have the toolkits which we call the Fair Model and the Panel Principles, so how you can basically use

these to look if there's a breach at work, how you would go about this or if you want to improve your policy and legislation in the workplace you can use various toolkits for that. We've got the medically assisted treatment, as I mentioned before, and we've also delivered to a cross-population of participants. This is our main focus because if we're saying human rights is for everyone it needs to be cross-population. This is what we've been doing, so it's for family members and carers, live-in experience groups, front line workers such as NHS, justice, social work, housing, GPs, policymakers and we've got organisation staff.

TARA SINGLETON – REACH ADVOCACY:

So, like Dilan mentioned, we do the delivery of these workshops with Reach Advocacy, and so far, this is what our workshop progress looks like. The darkest blue areas are the areas where we've completed workshops or multiple workshops, the lighter blue is areas that are currently in progress. We usually work with ADPs to schedule training targeted at a cross-population of participants. I think the general consensus is obviously you're there to learn from us and the trainers, but also there's a great value that we get in our feedback from learning from one another, being able to have that space to take your work hat off and consider how human rights affect you as a person, your family members, the people you know in your community to be able to understand how to apply that in the workplace as well. As you can see here, we've also overlaid all of the orange dots are places where there are prisons, so we can see that there's a large geographical spread concentrated in the Central Belt as well. You can see where the cross Scotland model can really help people get feedback from a variety of different workplaces, so it's a great place for you guys to also connect. And we've done previous work in a workshop with SPOA, so participants felt that this was really effective in their work and personal life, which is the big thing that we emphasize with human rights, talking here about how information links directly to how to provide support and care for individuals and ensure their rights are fully supported. That's a big thing as well, if we're informed about our own human rights and the laws and the policies, we can more easily effect other people and understand how to uphold their rights on a day-to-day basis in our jobs.

Other feedback from the Scottish Union Learning, which is through the STUC, emphasize that listening to the experience of others and giving other perspectives, from either other workplaces,

lived experience, other prisons across Scotland, this was something particularly valuable. I think that's one of the assets of this style of training as well.

DILAN KAYA – REACH ADVOCACY:

As I mentioned before, we had the one-day workshop, this is our accredited advocacy training which runs over three months. This has the contents of the day's workshop with basically more, so we look at consent, we look at policy, we look at guidelines in the workplace. It's basically a good practice for individuals to have this and know how to use that approach in their workplace, and, essentially, it's better for them as workers, but also if they're dealing with clients they have a more human rights-based approach lens in their work. They also learn about holding duty bearers accountable, learn about awareness as a key content in services. It's a Level 7 qualification, our next candidate cohort is in February – we've just finished our cohort for this year. We have the 11 candidates, Dundee Independent Advocacy Services, Advocacy in Angus and Mental Health Advocacy project. These are just some of our partnerships that we have with the awards; we do have more for February and we are going to see a larger group, which is a good progress for us.

This is our map for the awards. As you can see, the darker green is the places where we have our graduates and the lighter green is we're in conversations with them or we haven't actually had any candidates from those regions. This is some of our feedback, I will just read out the last one, 'I would thoroughly recommend anyone to do the course, even if not working in advocacy.' And like I said before, having that human rights understanding in your personal life is also important because if someone comes up to you and they're worried about a breach, they're worried they weren't treated fairly, then you can have these toolkits and see how you can help them and how you can help them to empower themselves as well.

TARA SINGLETON – REACH ADVOCACY:

Obviously we've said a lot of things about human rights without fully explaining what that is. A human rights-based approach is really about centring principles like dignity, fairness, wellbeing and instead of using them as an after effect or a tick box exercise, we're able to implement them from the ground up from the beginning. It can be applied in a variety of contexts, it is not specific to advocacy or substance use or that kind of thing, and so it's really a new way of understanding key issues

and the underlying societal factors that people are dealing with and what people carry with them throughout their lives. Some of which is trauma so that's a big part of it as well, understanding the roles of mental health, non-communicable diseases and that kind of thing in people's life and their health and wellbeing.

Like Dilan's mentioned it's about really empowering people on the personal level, so understanding and using these tools will really help people have an active role in community and wider society as well as in work, and understanding the role that dignity has in something like a trauma-informed approach. So, as that kind of approach trickles down in your workplaces and lives, thinking about dignity and human rights is going to be a big part of that, so they kind of go hand-in-hand but human rights helped us look at that bigger picture. An example of applying a human rights-based approach, this is something that we've been working on at Reach really over the course of its existence but we've recently been able to put it into practice. Talking about the human rights-based approach to advocacy and really what this is about at its centre... I'll do you the service of not reading that off, so if you can read it, lucky you, if not you won't have to hear me say it. Essentially, it's about considering all of the factors that exist in people's lives and how those factors can really add up to their experiences and things like trauma, health, etc. It's about remedying that through informed representation and making sure that equality and justice is happening across all levels of society, regardless of identity.

DILAN KAYA – REACH ADVOCACY: I'm just going to go over some of the important information that we share in the workshops and in the training. This is the new Human Rights Bill that's proposed for 2026 in Scotland. It will include discrimination against women, elimination of racial discrimination. The third one, which we call ESCR, is probably the most important and probably the most useful one you will have in your workplace, so it's the Economic Social and Cultural Rights. We've got the rights of persons with disabilities and right to a health environment. The Economic Social and Cultural Rights will include right to mental health, right to housing, right to adequate standards of living, which is areas you're probably familiar with or you work with. It's important to understand that this is coming to Scotland and just being ahead of the curve, because once it's been implemented it will have to change workplace practices and policies, and just because

it's not implemented now, it's not a reason to not follow guidelines and not be ahead of the curve now and not implementing a workplace practice that, when it is implemented, that you're going to be faced with some sort of a shock, probably.

I'm just going to go over some of the key areas relating to working in just and fair conditions: social protection; inadequate standard of living; the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health; education; enjoyment of the benefits of cultural freedoms and scientific progress.

TARA SINGLETON – REACH ADVOCACY: I think overall the key things to highlight that are probably most relevant to you all, and this is something that would become law, so it's something that's already probably accessible on a lot of levels, but things like the right to work, the right to favourable work conditions, equal pay for equal work, safe and health working conditions, the right to form and join trade unions and strike etc. And the biggest one, like Dilan was mentioning, the right to have an adequate standard of living, the right to housing, the right to food and, I think, what people often think of when they're thinking of health is things like GPs or NHS, but the right to health is a lot broader than that. It's the right for everybody in Scotland to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and that includes things that we call the social determinants of health, so the factors like housing, education, employment, social support. These things can have a large effect on people's lives and their wellbeing, and I think particularly when we're thinking about the context of supporting people in key transition times, like when they're leaving prison and people who are facing all of these services and trying to get connected with these things, it can be really difficult and that's where we can see a lot of turnover, particularly in difficult times for individuals. So, getting people connected and raising awareness for you all of these services, the things that are accessible to people who are leaving prison is a big, big role in making sure that they're supported in their community. I think when we think about this list of all these things that people are dealing with it's very overwhelming, particularly for people in vulnerable times in their lives. So, part of our training really focuses on looking at these services, looking at holding them accountable and really working from the bottom up so that people feel supported when they're trying to navigate a very difficult system.

Overall, some key takeaways from our workshop are things like toolkits and skills around dignity, human rights legislation, etc. focussing on staff rights and wellbeing, so as humans you guys all have access to these same rights and I think that's a key part in ensuring that your work is valued and that you guys feel supported. And preparing for new human rights legislation in Scotland, like the proposed new Human Rights Bill, so this kind of training just gets you ahead of the curve and overall, again, raises awareness and empowers people and makes it easier to hold people accountable for their responsibilities around human rights.

That's us. I think we're open to questions now. Our centre coordinator, Jed Brady, is going to take those so the heat's off us, but thank you guys.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks very much.

<Applause>

If I could just invite those of you that are going to be answering the questions to come back up and sit up here, if you don't mind. There's going to be seats because these three are going, so feel free to come up. Tara, darling, you still want to come up here and sit with Jed while he's doing the questions, feel free.

OK, folks, just before we open the floor up to questions. Obviously, first and foremost, the video. Very powerful so just to reiterate the message that was sent at the start, if it has affected anyone, please speak to somebody. I've got the EAP number in my phone if needed. I'm being serious because sometimes these videos do flag up things, so if there is anybody that's affected then by all means, come and speak.

All I'm going to do is 10/15-minute Q&A. The guys at either side have got the mikes so if somebody's got a question to ask then put your hand up, we'll get them across and we'll get the answers put up. Anyone to kick us off? Barlinnie.

[UNKNOWN SPEAKER], BARLINNIE: I actually think this is a really noble cause. I don't understand how at Barlinnie we are staffed for a thousand prisoners, that's our staff/prisoner ratio, but we're actually running nearer 1400. So, how are staff going to actually physically get the time to introduce all these initiatives, particularly when you consider the staff have suffered all sorts of

trauma as well, so they've got to deal with the prisoners' trauma... is that what you call a secondary trauma, would that be right? And still be what you are expecting them to do. It just doesn't work. And where's the money going to come from for that? 'cause surely it would make sense, if there's a limited budget, surely it would make sense that the money would go to the kids before they actually get into the criminal system.

SUE BROOKES – SPS INTERIM DIRECTOR: I think there's a number of different component parts to that. Personally, I would agree in many regards that if you want to prevent trauma then really society as a whole needs to invest in parenting and early learning and childcare and a whole set of issues to prevent people getting into difficulty in the first place. But nevertheless, we are here to run a prison system and we are funded on that basis and all government bodies are being asked to adopt trauma-informed practice, so we need to think about how does that apply in our context. I think I said at the beginning, this is not a new initiative or something that is an add-on to what we do anyway. Fundamentally trauma-informed practice is just about having a better understanding about why people maybe behave in the way in which they do, and building really good trusting relationships with them and prison staff actually do that all the time. Some of them do it exceptionally well. There are obviously limitations because in order to build good relationships you need to have time. I think that's absolutely the case, and so in some establishments that's easier to do than in others. I haven't got a magic wand, there's no easy answer to some of that. But if we, as we go along, modify everything that we do, at a corporate level as well as a local level to be trauma-informed, then hopefully we will be able to make a difference. The reason why I say that is because trauma-informed practice isn't just about what happens in establishments, it's about, at a corporate level: how do we invest our money; where do we put our money around the service; what do we prioritise; how do we build our buildings; what kind of staff health and wellbeing systems do we support and prioritise?

So, there's no easy answers. Some of the issues, certainly in relation to supervisory practice, will require us to think carefully about how we deploy staff in establishments and what kind of regimes we have ultimately, in order to give people the time to do that kind of supervision. I don't have the answer to that. I don't know how we're going to do that, but I do know, from the experience that I've had in

other organisations, that it is a really important part. So, we're just going to need to work our way through it a bit at a time, alongside you guys, and work out what is realistic and what our priorities are.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Sue. Can I go to Billy and then up to John? Thank you.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Hello, folks. I was lucky enough to be on the trauma-informed training at college, along with a few others. It was good, I enjoyed it, it was very thought-provoking and all the rest of it. I've got to say there was a certain belligerence for some individuals, which won't be mentioned. However, I then had a situation locally where an individual had highlighted trauma and all the rest of it and went through a process, went to Optima and then didn't get the support because the HR departments and the governors didn't actually look at this trauma-informed aspect of it and just treated them like a person and said, 'That's where you work, that's where you'll go, that's where we need you.' We eventually got it sorted out but that was after he had secondary trauma because they refused to let him go to that place to work. I just want to know, if we're doing this and we're going forward with this and we're supposed to be at a stage where, can we get it to the point where the senior team actually understand what they're supposed to be doing and actually put it into practice, please?

SUE BROOKES – SPS INTERIM DIRECTOR: Yeah, no, that's what we agree and Lee maybe you could come in.

LEE CURRIE – SPS HR BUSINESS PARTNER: Yeah, Billy, I think what we're going to be working towards is about trying to bring a consistency to the process. When we were audited that was one of the key recommendations and the attendance management policy is that we train line managers, we bring a consistency to our output and make sure that people are mindful of the services that are available because we do see pockets of people maybe not acting in accordance with policy or people not aware of the wider angle in things. I think one of the things, just to highlight, we've just recently entered into a partnership with Scottish government on their employee passport scheme in relation to reasonable adjustments. What that does is it gives HR business partners access to the wider Scottish government adjustments team, so when you do get certain cases we're now asking teams to

run it by an external organisation for input, feedback on what kind of resources and support we can provide to people. So, we are trying to widen that scope, but yeah, absolutely it's number one priority when it comes to services of this nature, is bringing in a level of consistency, that's why Anna's putting in place the training that she's putting in place, that's why we're focussing on areas like attendance management, critical incident response and we're trying to head things off at the pass. Because the reality of the situation, just to add on to what Sue said earlier, if you operate in a trauma-informed way you can be proactive and head things off at the pass. I always remember my work with Scottish Autism years ago, and we used to have a centre for boys who had extremely violent behaviours and they used to come down for lunch, go for dinner in a particular area. There was a boy sat on the table in a and I went over to him and went, 'Here you, get down off the table, you go and sit there.' And the boy proceeded to assault him, hurt himself, smash up the entire room. Then he went for the feedback with his manager after it and the manager sat with him and he went, 'Have you read the care plan?' And this person said, 'What are you talking about? I've never seen the care plan.' He says, 'Read the care plan.' Sure enough, reads the care plan and it says, 'Prone to violent behaviour when challenged.' So, what do you do? Diversionary tactics, apply a diversionary tactic and you get a different outcome to that situation. It's that kind of common-sense thinking. Adding onto the Barlinnie point, actually it could take some of the pressure off staff if you get it right and you do invest in it and you do it the right way, because it can prevent violent assaults, it can prevent time being taken up in areas where there's been that inconsistent and lack of understanding. I hope I answered your points there.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Lee. John.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: For some reason we were chosen as a pilot site and in the eleventh hour we got told that this trauma-based approach was coming. So, we had a look at it on the basis that they were going to try and bring into the national induction centre and on paper, absolutely fantastic! So, the very first question we asked was, 'I'm assuming this is not just for the prisoners in our care, but it's actually for staff in our care as well?' And it came to fruition, when the video screen for the person at headquarters says, 'Yes, that's what we're going to be looking at.' The second question was along the

lines that our establishment was trying to base the NES training on Level 1, and very quickly both Alan and I picked up that it was actually Level 3 training that we should be getting looked at as prison officers. So, straightaway we asked the question on that as well. The third question we then asked was, 'Has this been looked at in partnership?' And it wasn't, 'cause the national site didn't know anything about it up until we'd actually raised it at HMP Shotts. So, we raised it at that point in time and then it disappeared to then suddenly we'd seen an email coming out saying, 'You are seeking volunteers for doing trauma-based approach', which the SNC were involved in at that point in time.

So, that's where it sort of petered out for us. But, one of the questions, I suppose from our perspective was that although Sue's saying it's part of our tasks and what we do, that was used to be known as interpersonal skills and gaol craft, when you picked up these wee bits and pieces of, 'That person's not acting quite right; that person's maybe struggling with something just there or that person's got ADHD.' But what you've got now is you've got a different mix, you've got etizolam, spice, where you don't know what the hell the person is going through in front of you. They are looking like zombies, they're committing suicide, they're cutting themselves, they're attacking staff; you don't know on any given day what that person is suffering from.

The second part of this is it is a change. You're trying to do the training package training etc. and you've mentioned something called 'professionalization of the prison officer'. I've heard that somewhere before, where that was money putting on the table for POP to change your role. So, the question that arises to you at this point in time is: what does that look like in a remuneration package for staff if you want to bring this in?

SUE BROOKES – SPS INTERIM DIRECTOR: OK, there's a whole lot of different things there so I think my chances of being able to answer everything that you've asked is limited but I can give you some reflections, I suppose. The first thing is you're absolutely right, that we have a much more complex population than we ever had before, and many of the reasons why people in our care are taking alcohol and drugs is to mask underlying trauma. Now, prison staff are not, what we would call in the literature, 'trauma specialists' like psychologists, so it's never the intention that we're

going to train staff at that kind of level because there are circumstances where people's trauma has been so extreme that they do need referral onto specialist services. What we're really trying to work out, and it might be that Anna will want to come in, in doing the various pilots that we're doing and the training needs analysis and the mapping work, is we're trying to understand exactly where prison staff sit in terms of their training requirements. The NES framework has four different levels, there's: trauma-informed; trauma skilled; trauma enhanced and trauma specialist. People have different views about different prison officer roles, and Anna was talking about programme staff or staff that are working in the reception or staffing the halls. Exactly where do they sit in relation to those different training inputs? So, the different pilots that we're running are about helping us get information to properly inform what kind of training for the bulk of prison staff will we need going forward. That's what we're trying to test out and discuss with staff as we go along so that we can get a good foundation for the training.

I have no idea that I mentioned professionalization. Certainly nothing that we were doing is to do with POP, POP1, POP2, POP3, whatever. It is nothing to do with, anything to do with that, right. I can categorically state that that is the case. All we're trying to do is give people a better understanding and knowledge base about why the people in our care behave in the way in which they do and some techniques that they can use to work differently with them, on a day-to-day basis, to prevent, in so far as we can, some of the violent incidents that are taking place. Because some of the things that happen in prisons are triggers for people with trauma and they do lead to further difficulties. I don't know, Anna, if you want to add anything in terms of the training?

ANNA MACKENZIE – SPS HEAD OF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT: Yeah, just to build on what Sue said. I think first of all, the point is when we run pilots, they are pilots, they are trials. They are for our research to be able to see, just like you said, John, you realised very quickly that actually the level that you're being trained at wasn't the appropriate level. So, the reason that we run these pilots, and sometimes pilots for L&D can take a very long time because we need to garner a specific depth of data to be able to know that we're getting it right. So, when they happen your feedback is absolutely essential so be as... I might regret saying this. Be as honest as you possibly can be. <Laughs>

Secondly, you made a really good point about what staff can already do, which I alluded to when I spoke. But also the challenges, particularly of late, over the past few years that staff on the front line are dealing with, and we are very aware of that from a training point of view. Where I think we've struggled in the past from an L&D point of view is that we have done things separately, we've done subjects in silo and we've done new focuses in silo, so we'll do desistance and we'll do mental health training and we'll only do it for some establishments because that population need it more or we'll do this over here because we think that population need it more. And actually, what we need to do, which does take a long time, and it takes funding, and it takes staff resource and that's the bit that I'm still trying to figure out, is we need to join it all together. So I'm very, very aware, particularly from speaking to your senior management teams, that drug and alcohol training, particularly drug training with the psychoactive substances that you're dealing with and those behaviours is very, very needed, as is up-to-date mental health training. But actually they should sit separately because they all can join together, as Sue said, a lot of it is triggered from underlying trauma, but mental health challenges can be self-medicated by a lot of the alcohol and drug consumption that you're seeing. So, really what we need to focus on or what I need to focus on my area of the business, particularly for your staff, is joining it all together so it doesn't just seem like something else that we're focussing on; it all needs to make sense as an entire learning package throughout someone's career. As I said, that does take time and it does take staff and resource.

To go back to the point that the representative from Barlinnie made. I am very, very aware that it takes time to undertake training as well, so the flexibility and how we're going to be able to do that, as Sue said, will be done in partnership with all of the establishments and with yourselves to see how we can do it in a workable way so that it doesn't take away from the challenges and the work that you have to do every day.

SUE BROOKES – SPS INTERIM DIRECTOR: I just wanted to make the point that you heard earlier in the presentation that we've run these four senior leadership sessions, so gentleman from, I think it was Glenochil, was saying, 'What do we do when senior leaders don't understand this?' The whole point of doing that with senior leaders was to help them understand, 'cause you actually don't know, I'm a senior leader, you've no idea what

kind of trauma I've experienced in my life. So, they're all human as well and may have issues or misunderstandings so it's important we start from that level.

Can I just ask you all please, when we do the rollout to establishments, we will be wanting to do that as a multidisciplinary team, so it'll be the senior team in the establishment, along with social work and psychology. But the intention is very much that local PLRs will be involved in that rollout, so please can I ask you to be involved in those sessions because what you have to say is as important as what the governor has to say in relation to all of this. It's all about human experience and your involvement in it is going to be critical as we go forward to make sure that we do work alongside people and we don't just dump things on you. And my apologies if you felt like that in Shotts, that wasn't the intention.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: OK, we need to round it up. I'm just conscious I've got three to my left that haven't been asked a question. I have got questions to put to them, but this is your opportunity to engage with the guests. Does anyone have any question or point of Reach Advocacy that they would like to put to them?

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: I didn't hear anything on the remuneration package.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Has anybody got anything for Reach Advocacy?

No. OK. Jed, from my point of view then, I've just a couple of things, having known the organisation for quite a while. I just want to touch on a couple of things that your colleagues had made. And it was quite noticeable that other organisations that deal with similar clientele, if you want to call it that, to what we end up with in prison seem to be getting some form of training and there's some form of acknowledgement from their employer that this is needed, West Dunbartonshire, Dundee Council, NHS, so on and so forth. So, my question is in two parts and it goes back to the training that you've done with members of this trade union. Do you think that, considering the people that we work with, that the skills gap that our members have has to be addressed? I know we're looking at the trauma-informed stuff through NHS, which we're working with, but you have the outputs, you have

the pre-course and the post-course information that you done. And it's just if you can speak a wee bit on that and is there a skill shortage for our members in line with other agencies?

JED BRADY – REACH ADVOCACY: I believe so. I believe when we done the workshops there was a... but it's not just the Prison Service, it's all staff. It's all statutory services. What did come out was the demand for knowing how to hold people accountable, so knowing how to hold the GP, the housing, the social work accountable whenever the guys were leaving your premises. I think that was something that we're really interested in. Also, their own personal life and learning that these rights are for you. So it is what you're doing. The best thing about this approach is it goes up the way; a rights-based approach always goes up the way so it always goes to the duty bearer who is accountable. That's one thing that was definitely.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: OK. <Interruption> Sorry, I thought John had shot me!

We've come to the end of this session. I just want to end on, again, it was part of the last presentation and it's about the Human Rights Bill 2026 that's going to come in. Where we work is going to change. The law is going to dictate it is going to change; it's going to be difficult for people, your members, but it is coming in. It's not something we can run and something we can hide from so we do need to make sure we get the best training for our members. We need to work with the employer to make sure it's coming in, because frankly, we don't dictate the law. We have to do it when it comes in and it is coming so we have to make sure we get the best possible training for our membership and the commitment is there. I'm pleased that it's a five-to-ten-year plan and it's not trying to get rushed in in 20 minutes, 'cause that's when it fails. But, as Sue says, we do have to engage; the training package is going to be coming round so we do need to get involved in it and we need to start the conversation because the last thing we need is a ten-year thing and people worry about it in the last 20 minutes so conversations are needing to be had. Thank you, both SPS and Reach Advocacy coming in, I know it was a long journey for you to get here and it'll be a longer journey going back, no doubt. But thanks for coming, I really appreciate it and I hope Conference appreciated it as well, so thank you.

<Applause>

Conference, we're going to be carrying on the agenda. If we can keep in order, I'd appreciate that, we're going to be carrying on the agenda.

Motion 22 – Barlinnie.

AUSTIN O'CONNER – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Motion 22 reads: That Conference applaud the Occupational Health Staff, who have kept to their principles on staff health advice. Who in their reports have stated that they are there for 'fitness for work advice' and that the scheme medical advisor is there for ill health retirement, IHR advice.

Now, if you bear with me a wee bit. This motion and the next motion may seem contradictory but hopefully I'll be able to explain them to you. I'm not being facetious or flippant, when you hear the next motion, you'll hopefully understand the reason for this motion.

We, in Barlinnie in particular, have a massive volume of Optima Reports and they've always had major inconsistencies regarding ill health retirement, hence motion 23 we'll come to in a minute. However, lately we've had more positive experiences of Optima Reports informing the employer that Optima is specifically there for advice specifically on an individual's fitness for work. The question that they've been asking all the time about ill health retirement is for the scheme medical advisor and not for them. Now, we just think that that should be acknowledged, because what we're looking for is fair, unbiased, knowledgeable and consistent occupational health provider information. I think we should acknowledge the small group of nurses who seem to have turned the tide a wee bit and put their head above the parapet, I think, and stating that they are not there for ill health retirement advice, they are there purely for fitness for work advice. I hope you support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Conference, do we have seconder for the motion? Glenochil, do you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, Conference. I'm in favour of this motion and I would like to support the motion because I've been to five individual's occupational health face-to-face reports because individuals felt as if they were going into a bear trap and they wanted representation to go with them.

I've got to say that the doctors that they saw at those face-to-face were brilliant – they took the time to listen to the individual, they took time to take notes, they supplied the report that highlighted the individual's issues and problems. That's their part done. They did that very well. Unfortunately, our employer decides then to add extra questions in later on like, 'It's about fitness for work.' Yes, fitness for work, nothing to do with ill health retirement. Nothing to do with anything like that but they keep insisting they want to add that in. So, I commend Barlinnie for bringing this up and I'd like to support the motion. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking in support of this motion. It was pointed out quite clearly there's another motion coming that looks contradictory, but I very much got it that some of our occupational health staff have kept to their principles and stated that they are for fitness for work advice and not ill health retirement, and some of them are under immense pressure, I believe. This advice should therefore be applauded and I thank Con for bringing the motion. Unfortunately, many of them do not have the same principles, but I think the next motion will address that. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Barlinnie, right to reply? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 23 – Barlinnie.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair, across the choir. Hopefully this will now clear it up. Motion 23 reads: This Conference condemns the employer's occupational health provider due to its contradictions and inconsistencies when compiling reports on staff members.

Now, it's few and far between from the previous motion, the ones I was praising. The majority of them are this one. Examples are, professional clinicians, nurses who are saying, and I quote, 'This employee may be fit to return to work within three months, yes, but he may meet the criteria for ill health retirement as well.' You cannot be both. You're either one or the other. It's happening all

the time and you're beginning to think to yourself, is this sinister? 'cause it's not an isolated case, this isn't isolated. Is it sinister or are they just hopeless at their job? I don't know. I just think that we're having to remind staff to check when they get a report through, don't let them ... on our bellies but it's naysayers are on the phone. And we're double-checking that the transcript's right for a start, from what the conversation was, and before they gave a consent to send it. In general, you would begin to wonder if they're being pressurised. They're an outsourced business anyway, so you're beginning to think are they being pressurised into it with this question that's just evolved in about ill health retirement. Are they being pushed on to stick our guys down this road that more be more cost efficient? I don't know but in general this raises 18 months/two years ago, this question get inserted into the reports and it wasn't going away. I hope you support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Shotts to second the motion.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference, seconding the motion. Just as an add on to this, we've also got HML in the background of this, so just what Austin says there, we have also experienced that and we have actually had to advise all members to not let HR get a copy of the paperwork first until you've actually read it. Even then we've been told by Optima that they're not going to change anything that's been perceived as incorrect by the member of staff. The one that we had from HML, for example, we put in a Section 11 and it went through, the person had an accident at work, it was confirmed that he had an accident at work, everybody said he had an accident at work. The HML doctor came by and says, 'Due to his age it could be osteoarthritis.' Now, the person hadn't even actually taken him in and medically examined him, but he just said basically due to his age we think it's this, not the fact that he slipped on black ice and damaged his shoulder. So, it took me to write to him saying that, 'I'm going to take you to the Quality Commissioner under the basis that you are being ageist', before they finally changed their mind and accepted that it was a Section 11. This is the type of stuff that you're actually having to deal with just now, so please support the motion, colleagues.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking in support of the motion. Unfortunately, as Austin pointed out, many of our occupational health providers do not have the same principles as the few that stand up for their principles and there are many contradictions, as pointed out, and inconsistencies in the reports on staff members. I'm sure that you can all think of many examples like the ones that John have pointed out. I think at this junction it's also important, John touched on HML, who do submit a report when it comes to ill health retirement, and unfortunately our employer, or some of our employers on occasion refer to an ill health retirement and quote bits of it out when looking at capability. So, be mindful that there's completely different parameters on both, and Optima do the fitness for work in the short term, and HML do the long term and that's when you're going to have a life-long injury. Please be very mindful and support the motion in condemning those that don't stand to their principles.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Barlinnie, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 24 – Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Motion reads: Conference ask that the SNC to engage in talks/action to ensure that members are not unduly punished for attempting to follow Optima's recommendations regarding reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments are not just for six weeks, they can be needed for longer, yet HR departments seem to think they can insist that they are for a maximum of six weeks.

This motion came about because I got in a very heated debate with our HR dp who insisted that a reasonable adjustment can only be for six weeks. I went, 'That's not what the Optima report said. Optima report said, "This person needs a long period of adjustment back into the workplace, potentially anything up to three months or longer."' They went, 'They can't get it. It's only for six weeks.' That seems very prescriptive. It doesn't take into account what Optima's recommending, which we pay a lot of money to get them to look at our members, our staff, and say, 'This is what's required, this allows this person back into the workforce. Please support that individual back into the workforce, this is what they need.' And yet we're hitting a barrier every time when that comes

up. We shouldn't have that barrier; we don't need that barrier and we need our managers and our HR departments to actually take on board what Optima say when it comes to our members. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference. I would just wish for one day we could actually get somebody to put a reasonable adjustment in place. I've just recently had a fight with my HR on the basis that we've got somebody who is actually a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010. And I asked for a reasonable adjustment, which the SPS has put as one of the examples and Acas has actually put as an example, is that you can actually say that, 'We're not going to use trigger points due to the person's disability, so we won't use a trigger point in this instance.' 'No.' 'OK, what about looking at actually increasing the amount of trigger points, 'cause again, within the SPS they say that you can do this, it's reasonable, it's at no cost.' 'No.' So, I've then run into a running battle of emails from Monday till yesterday where I finally lost the totty and I've wrote to the Equalities Commission reporting the SPS for a breach of the Equalities Act. I shouldn't have to do that. The member of staff who's suffering from mental health doesn't need the trauma of getting a letting saying, 'If you go off again within the next year, you'll be looked at under the Capability Process.' Thank you very much for the support HR, that is really appreciated. That's what I've had to deal with. This is the type of things we need to put a halt to and we need to fight them at every opportunity if this is the stance that they're taking. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Anybody else wish to speak?

JASON HALL – BRANCH CHAIR, DUMFRIES: Chair, Conference. I want to support this motion. I'm going to keep it quite brief. I've had similar instances this year where the recommendations have just not been met and staff have been almost felt like forced back into a position that could almost put them back off sick. This slightly ties in with a motion that Edinburgh have got, number 28. They kind of tie in together so I'm not going to speak too much more about it, I just wanted to show my support for this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Anybody else? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Chair, Conference, speaking in support of the motion on behalf of the SNC. Reemployment Reasonable Adjustment Changes that employers are compelled to consider and apply them or introduce them where they're reasonably able to do where they can accommodate it and where they can afford it or where it's fiscally affordable, I think was the phrase, Jim. They exist to assist the physical or mental impairment of people and the adjustments can be all ranges. I've heard issues about having time limits on them, some of them cannot have time limits on them, some of them are needed and are able to be put in place, so I don't know where this type of thing comes from. It doesn't appear to be the legislation or the Equality Act; it appears to be either a lack of understanding or a different understanding as to how they're applied. We're already engaging, we're looking to fully review these processes so please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Billy, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 25 – Shotts.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference. The motion reads: In relation to capability dismissal the MAAP contained the following statement, 'The objective is to ensure any dismissal for reasons of ill health is managed in a manner which maintains the dignity of the employee and that any potential for financial hardship is reduced as far as practicable.' Conference mandate the SNC to gain assurance from the SPS that they agree with this statement and resolve to act in the spirit with which it was intended. Conference also instructs the SNC in partnership with the SPS to review the Absence Management Policy and have this statement added to it.

Colleagues, we've recently had a spate of staff getting told that their capability interviews were being held off until such times as they go and look at ill health medical retirement. This seems to be a spin-off from every HR department, not we cannot look at capability, they've not looked at ill health medical retirement. Fortunately, I don't know if you've seen it yesterday, something came out from

the NEC, where it quite clearly stated, 'We are now aware of two recent cases that went to the CSAB where the ex-employee appealed the decision to award 75% compensation as a result of the IHR point. The CSAB found in the appellant's favour in both cases and the board did not agree with the department's reasoning for restricting the level of award of 75% based on a failure to apply for the IHR and the CSAB interpretation of the current EPN we believe there is a significant risk that the department will continue to lose cases if we apply our current interpretation of the organisation's guidance.' HR are saying that you've got to for Medical Health Retirement. No, you don't. This is the whole point, they've got the policy in place and the policy's quite clear. If you are going through the process and the length of time it takes Optima are saying this person's not going to make full and effective service. But the full and effective service part of the process is getting missed by the employer. We had somebody who slipped on black ice, got told he was old, we won the appeal on the basis that I was going to sue them, and then at that point in time they then said, 'No, you need to go back to Optima and we need to get a definitive that you're not going to return back to work.' But all the timescales were met. But no, because he's not got the ill health medical retirement process done. What we were saying was this person's now went onto half wages. So they went onto half wages, then they were going onto zero wages and then they kept sending them back to get another assessment, and another assessment, 'Can you confirm?' 'Oh, we had a look and it might be his back so we're going to just double check that it's not his back.' These were all processes that were getting delayed, and delayed, and delayed and his dignity was being put at question and he was getting questioned on whether or not he was actually ill, and then he was getting questioned on the basis that he was off that length of time, 'But we want to get another medical documentation on him.' It was absolutely ridiculous and we had to fight this and finally he got put at the door on capability last week. That took nearly eight months. Eight months of somebody not being at their work, we're quite definitely saying that he cannot carry out his full contractual duties. 'Can he carry out his full contractual duties within the next three months?' No. Eight months later he's still not able to carry out his full contractual duties but SPS are holding him off, and holding him off, and holding him off until they've finally done it. This person's suffered mentally, physically from an accident, and indeed, financially 'cause they didn't even offer to say, 'By

the way, it's us that's putting you back, it's us that's putting you back, therefore we'll put you on gardening leave.' That should've been the first port of call and it wasn't. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Secunder for the motion. Glenochil, you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'll keep this brief. I support this motion because it's happening all the time. We recently, at Glenochil, had a member of staff who went through or has went through ill health medical retirement. It took that long for the ill health medical retirement part to come back with a, 'You don't require it', to then get told they're now waiting to go out on Capability but they're still waiting to find out if they meet the criteria for Capability. That person's ticking along and the clock's ticking until they get to half pay and zero pay. What we eventually had, with one individual that went out, was they went out under Capability, but they were on half pay by then, which then impacts on various things, such as your pile-on and all the rest of it. Now, they were happy to go but they shouldn't have had to get to a point where they were financially penalised because they were no longer fit to do the job and it's a system that says, 'Here's what we need you to do. Do you meet that criteria? No, you don't. Therefore, we have to look at how we can either keep you in the job by moving you to another job or we don't have you there.' That's the whole process that's there. We shouldn't be adding extra to it. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. College is up to speak on this motion or the next one? OK. Any other speakers? Perth.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference, stand up here to support this motion. Capability is a compensatory intervention available for staff that can no longer do their job, through no fault of their own or out of their own control. It's not a voluntary exit package. There are staff who will not be able to do their job, for a number of reasons, and they'll have no control over, not all of which meet the criteria, no longer any control over what they're doing or might not meet ill health retirement. The process has kind of changed recently, has it not? Previously, if I'm at a Capability meeting, I'm arguing for governors not

to dismiss, to keep folk in a job longer. Not so much now.

You wonder where it came through. We got an email that came to Perth that was issued on the 9th of April, it came from HR and the heading's: Email Capability Dismissals. And it's advising governors to explain alternatives to dismissal or Capability. These would include adjustments to role, alternative duties, ill health retirement and providing more support and time to return to work or pursue ill health retirement. It doesn't mention asking them to resign in there, however, we've got examples where we're also asking staff to resign rather than go through Capability. So, that sounds good, those three or four options there, adjustment to role... point is, there's not that many adjustments for operational staff, it's not available to everybody and if you're not successful, what happens? Alternative duties – that depends. We have examples where people have been offered jobs that don't exist for as long as it takes for you to come back, three, six, nine months, however long it takes. Alternatively, depending possibly on who you are, no alternatives or you can get an alternative, but see, once you've done your six weeks if you're not fit enough, you're back off sick. Even if that means we are running short in an operational line.

Ill health retirement encourage, fair enough, but is it right that staff feel obliged to appeal for fear of losing something in Capability? Thanks very much for that John, that's good to know. Even when they do not have the necessary additional medical evidence, so it's potentially a great thing. But what happens when that extends to 300, 500 days even? Becomes farcical. They're trying to sicken staff, again, to get them to resign to stop this going back to Capability.

Colleagues, let's not talk about the cost, the organisational and vacant post. Let's talk about the cost to our colleagues, the financial hardship, loss of dignity, loss of control of some of the life and uncertainty in their future. They're not getting better. I ask you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking from the SNC in support of this motion. I would like to thank Shotts for pointing out where it was in the old policy, save me looking it up. There is real evidence that some governors are not acting in the

manner described in this motion, clear evidence that we've all seen in all of our establishments. It doesn't surprise me that Perth felt the need to speak on this motion, 'cause they have current clear evidence of people that are not acting in the fashion that this describes.

It's right and proper that we should seek to gain this assurance from the SPS and obviously we will talk to the SPS about making sure that we treat our staff with dignity and, where possible, we'll limit financial hardship. It's also right and proper that we should seek to get this back into the new absence management policy, as it was in the old policy, and make it clear to governors that deal with these. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Shotts, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 26 – SPSC & HQ.

PAUL DUFFIN – BRANCH CHAIR, HQ: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 26 reads: This Conference mandates the SNC to arrange a meeting between Optima, the SPS and the POAS to discuss the medical advice being received in relation to ill health retirements, inefficiency dismissals and injury benefit applications. The aim of the motion is for our members to receive person-centred medical advice and not just generic advice.

The local branch is purely frustrated by the lack of definitive medical advice being provided by our occupational health advisors, Optima. If I can give you a quick example: an employee, having a second hip replacement and diagnosed with hip dysplasia, an Optima physician issued a letter which stated, 'We advise that the employee should no longer work on the operational front line or participate in CNR or PPT.' The response from HML to the ill health retirement Application was that, 'Due to the physician only advising that the employee should not work on the operational front line or participate in CNR or PPT, the report did not state they couldn't continue in role and only advised they shouldn't, therefore we cannot issue a Medical Retirement Certificate. This is just semantics and needs addressed. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that. Have we got a seconder

for the motion? Shotts, wish to speak? Anyone else wish to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we ask you to support this motion. I can also confirm that members of the SNC have met with the SPS in May, as part of the follow-up discussions of the draft document compiled by the SPS Development Director on efficiency compensation dismissals. During the research for this document opinions were sought, both from the TUS nationally and locally, governors and HRBPs. A common theme amongst the comments was the need for improvement from Optima. One such comment supporting this was, 'Medical input needs to be better to support the decision making process.' Going forward this union will attempt to arrange a meeting with Optima, after all efficiency dismissals or injury benefit applications should be without question on an individually based report and not some generic response. Conference, please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Right to reply? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 27 – Barlinnie.

MICK MULLHOLLAND – BRANCH CHAIR, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. Motion 27 reads: That Conference condemns the employer regarding the application and handling of efficiency dismissals.

This attempt by the employer to make the efficiency compensation process more robust is particularly abhorrent when you consider that many of our members, many of whom have had 30+ years' service, have made themselves unwell by simply attending their work. The fact that the process has been looked into with no changes in a civil service policy suggests that the employer is more concerned with saving money rather than the welfare of their staff. Perhaps it's time that the employer focuses more on supporting staff's wellbeing and that they're actually fit enough to work, rather than trying to penny pinch on the backs of staff that have simply had enough and can't face going back to work. doesn't do the employer's actions justice. I ask Conference to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Shotts second it.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference. Shotts condemns SPS.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: I'm assuming you're supporting the motion? Any other speakers? Phil Fairlie for the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks Conference. As you've probably worked out by now that when I come up, we're about to flip the direction of travel which we'll be going, which is exactly what I'm doing again with this motion. And it's not, I have to say, the right from the beginning, it's not because every single one of us here couldn't give examples of cases that have been managed in a way that lead to motions like this coming to Conference. Some of us are still dealing with cases right now that have been incredibly badly handled that are beyond frustrating. Some of the cases we've heard talked about in previous motions actually are some of the same ones that we can relate to, because either we've been involved in them ourselves or similar ones have been managed in the same way.

The wording in the motion is that we condemn the employer regarding the application handling of efficiency dismissals when the SNS came to have this conversation, and actually what we fed into the conversation was similar to what we got back from yourselves over the course of the year. There are plenty of examples we can give where actually the employer has handled some of those cases exactly as we want them to be handled, they're given the same or the right level of care, the dignity and respect that the members of staff are entitled to expect through that process. And every one of us can give examples of people that we've managed who've been dealt with in that way. I think if you've brought a motion to Conference that's singled out or specified those governors or HRPBs who fail to deliver that on behalf of the members under that circumstance, you'd have no problem getting support from the SNS. But we need to be honest with ourselves and recognise that if we're giving an outright condemnation, we can't do that when we know we've got as many cases sitting that we're dealing with and they have dealt with individuals in the way that we would expect them to do and just ignore that when we come to motions like this. So, had you phrased it in a different way,

you'd have got our support 100%, but an outright condemnation is not one that we can support based on our own experience of dealing with some of the cases, so we ask you to reject it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Mick, right to reply.

MICK MULLHOLLAND – BRANCH CHAIR, BARLINNIE: I respect Phil's opinion on this, but surely it's incumbent of us to make sure that we are looking after the welfare of our members and playing with words and items so important as this is a bit childish, to be fair. I think you're being very semantic. I don't think you're doing the members justice

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 28 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion reads: That the SNC request an urgent review of the Attendance Management Policy which, at present, forces people back to work when ill.

This came from the floor at Edinburgh and the thinking behind it or the individual that raised it, he felt that the trigger points were now too tight and the fact that the long-term sick part of it was brought into the trigger points as well. He genuinely believed that genuine people who were off sick were being unfairly treated. Now, we understand that every large organisation must have a sick policy, so we understand that, so it's how the trigger points are set and people who are genuinely sick should never be treated worse. Now, I know some of the feedback came from staff from around establishments that the original Sick Management Policy was not appropriate and, let's say, was sometimes being misused but that's up to personal opinion. His opinion is it's not particularly great. There's some anecdotal evidence that says that he was hearing that staff were returning to their work early, even though they were still not really fit in case they went on a stage. So, he believes there should be a review, please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC. Colleagues, we are supporting this motion on the basis that we warned, at the comms meeting we had before we went to the AMP, that the minute you make HR at your local establishments overseers, they bring their jackboots. And that's what's actually happened here. We've got people now where, a process that was done quick, is now being convoluted and every single process we were taking three/four people offline to go and sit doing the reviews to try and defend the members of staff, the length of time it's taken to get it through and then to not actually follow through with the whole process. This AMP needs reviewed properly and we need to put proper safeguards in for staff, especially those suffering from disabilities, 'cause we know operationally it's difficult and where we put people and how we protect them etc. but this whole system that they've got in place right now, it's just not working, it's a terrible Absence Management Policy. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC against the motion. If you bear with me. What it asks for is an urgent review of the policy and it's because it came from the floor in Edinburgh and they believe that it was worse than the old policy. The stages actually, in the new Absence Management Policy, are slightly less punitive than they were in the old one. Your first stage isn't an official warning, and the next stage there is a bit more leeway by two days then three days. So, it's slightly less punitive than we had in the last policy. The long-term sick changes that Gordon talked about was a difficulty in the policy, whereas people were perhaps misusing it or abusing it, and it was feedback from staff and members that were saying that that had to be looked at the way we dealt with long term. What we also introduced at that point with a new policy, was the discretion, and the discretion was introduced and when discretion's used properly it's a good thing to have.

I've listened to John and what he's talking about and the issues that we do have, and we do have the issues. The policy that we have is supposed to be supportive and it's supportive based. However, that's when it's applied properly or in the cases that John's talking about, is normally when the policy isn't being applied properly and that's what we

should be challenging and we should be making sure that it's done robustly. To urgently review the whole policy, that might actually work against us rather than for us. If it was all looked at and different structures were put in for breaches it could perhaps work against us. What we need to ensure is that the policy is applied properly.

I sit on an occupational health group that Lee Currie chairs, and we talk very much about absences and absence policy and Lee Currie puts it out to HRPBs how it should be making sure that it's applied properly. We don't need to revisit urgently the whole policy, what we need to do is make sure it's applied properly at all the levels we work in. So, on that basis, please reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Edinburgh, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 29 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Quite a simple motion and it reads quite clearly: That staff should be paid in full pending the results of Section 11 Applications. The delay in processing these claims can cause members severe financial hardship.

I'm sure we all have staff in our establishments who have got a Section 11 Application outstanding and it can take anywhere from three months, four months, five months and then the paperwork gets lost and it has to be re-submitted could be even longer. It's very unfair on the individual that they could eventually go on half pay, even no pay pending this outcome. The motion says the individual should remain on half pay, full pay, whatever they are and shouldn't suffer any financial hardship. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Stirling. Corton Vale. Stirling, you wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we are asking you to reject this motion. We accept what Edinburgh say, that this motion is well-intended, it raises the question what if a Section 11 Application is not successful. So,

it's not successful after you've been paying these individuals for that x, y length of time. How is the overpayment of salary repaid, over what period and how does that stop somebody going into financial hardship at the end if they're unsuccessful? Gordon, you kind of touched on the answer to this. The real issue here is maybe the time it takes for these cases to come to fruition. So, Conference, please reject this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Edinburgh, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? The motion's lost.

Motion 30 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Conference, motion 30 reads: Uniformed staff with over 20 years' service are allocated 5 days extra leave entitlement.

Conference, there's precious little to offer those with long service now and there's no substantial acknowledgement from the employer other than a medal these days. For those of you old enough to remember, we had this previously, 20 years being a prison officer where an extra 5 days was seen as an achievement, a milestone with which you were truly rewarded with somebody substantial which you could use every year thereafter. Now it's pretty much another day in the office. So, the motion's asking to give something back to those that have dedicated a large part of their lives to being a prison officer and give those who've yet to reach that the sense of achievement we once had by rewarding them for their service. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Edinburgh, wish to speak. Anybody else wish to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Speaking on behalf of the SNC. Colleagues, we're asking you to reject this motion. And again, it's not that it's not well-intended, it very probably is, but it's uniformed staff versus members. Increasingly, recently, we have got members in non-uniform grades everywhere, in all areas and all grades, and it should be for all members. So, we're asking you to reject that motion on that basis. If you ask the question in the different way then you'll mandate us a different way. Please, reject it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Malky, right to reply? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 31 is from Perth, seconded by Stirling.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion reads that: Mandate the SNC that all flexible working and part-time staff annual leave entitlement is returned to days and not hours.

I don't know when it was changed, why it was changed or how, but why is it that terms and conditions are different for part-time staff? That's those that are successful in their application for flexible working. 37 hours gives us a 7.4 hour day's leave and that's a sacrifice for most people; if you're part time it's pro rata, 18.5, 3.7 would be a day's leave, that's if it's rostered. If it's not, and it's ad hoc, part-time staff suffer at times a severe disadvantage. To get a day off they will sacrifice, in days, the equivalent of two to get an ad hoc day off and hours the equivalent of two.

Just an example, 'cause this is live, we've got a solution to it. Our member of staff needed seven days off, needed them, has to be ad hoc leave to the letter of the law. 74 hours she would needed to have taken. We got a solution or they did, fair play they did. However, she only is entitled to 140 hours leave a year. Half of it in one week because of ad hoc, *only* because she's part time. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Stirling.

JOHN GAMBLE – BRANCH CHAIR, STIRLING: Chair, SNC, Conference, asking you to support this motion. This is one of the anomalies that's been picked up recently by staff that are part time. It was brought to us, the same as what Tony was saying, was ad hoc leave seems to be costing part-time staff a lot more than it does fulltime staff. So, if they were taking a casual leave day at the weekend, for example, it's one day for us, it seems to be two days for them. I understand talking to others there might be mechanisms to somehow adjust this, however, I don't know what they are and no one else does 'cause it seems to be some sort of grey area, which we established at a grievance appeal recently. So, we're asking you to support this motion to try and make it clearer for our members.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Stirling. Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. We had a similar issue a number of years ago and my colleague, Mr Meikle, who would be the chair at the time, is aware of it. It came through a staff grievance and there was a similar scenario regarding ad hoc leave and there is a way to do it, and it was the result of the grievance that it came out. So, yes, it was ad hoc leave, it would be through the hours they were due, so if an individual is due a nine-hour shift, it would still go through as 3.7, but there would be an adjustment made on the SHAR sheet for the additional hours to make it up to the appropriate hours that the person was due on that day. So, that was the result of a staff grievance and I'm quite surprised that that's not filtered through for everybody. But that's the way to sort that particular issue out and it can be done. Still support the motion anyway.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Speaking in support of this motion, and thanks Gords, for stealing my thunder, 'cause I was just about to talk about SHAR sheets. I totally agree with the speakers and it is wrong and it is quite obvious that when you're taking leave and the day that you're taking off is more than 7.4 it could work to the detriment. Normally that would be a weekend ad hoc day that a member of staff would be taking and they lose far too many hours of their total. It was won as a grievance, as Gordon pointed out, and there is some goals that have managed to discuss, with their HRPB, let's look at that when it's unfair and can we make adjustments to the SHAR sheet where necessary and looked at on a case-by-case basis. So, speaking fully in support of the motion that we would approach the SPS and ask that we return it to day's leave; if a fulltime guy gets 42 days leave, something doing 50% should get 21 days. It's as straightforward as that. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Going to the vote. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 32 – SPSC & HQ.

PAUL DUFFIN – BRANCH CHAIR, HQ: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 32 reads: This Conference mandates the SNC to negotiate with SPS that the full entitlement for annual leave is awarded earlier than five years. This is in line with Scottish government bodies.

Conference, some areas within the public sector reach the full entitlement to annual leave after four years, Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service for one example. We ask the SNC approach the SPS to have this implemented for our members, as we should have coherence in public sector benefits across the board. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Paul. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks, Conference. We are looking for examples of any agencies and departments that had the leave earlier than the five years based on the motion that came in and came up with the exact same examples as you've just heard colleagues. So, happy to take forward that motion and support it. I would just say to you, those of you who've been around long enough, wear your flack jackets, remembering the absolute kicking we got when we got it down from 20 years, so not all your members will applaud you for this one, but happy to support it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Going to the vote. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 33 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 33 reads: That the SNC negotiate with the SPS parity in annual leave entitlement in years 1 to 5 for new staff in Bands C, D and E with similar staff or new staff in Bands F, G, H and I.

This came to the branch attention in Edinburgh through a member who had raised it with the ... and we looked at it and it's quite clear in the SPS Annual Leave Policy that new recruits at a certain level or a certain banding only get 34 days leave in their first five years. But, if you are lucky enough to join in a senior management grade, in your first

year you get 37 days for the first five years. A terrible anomaly which needs fixed, in my opinion. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Have we got a seconder for the motion? Polmont, you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Speaking in support of this motion. It actually came as somewhat a surprise recently when this came to light 'cause it was unaware of it and it wasn't until we'd seen the policy, but who could possibly think it's right when an operational C, D or E starts his work and is working in busy galleries or any operational role and he gets his 34 days, but somebody that started in a senior management position gets 37 days. It doesn't compute to me why that would be right. I have a copy of the policy and it's right that it was brought to Conference and it is something that we'll try and address if you support the motion. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Edinburgh, like to reply? All those in favour of the motion. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 34 – Low Moss. Conference, looking for permission to withdraw. All those in favour. Anybody against it being withdrawn? We'll do that again guys, please. All those in favour of the motion being withdrawn. OK, motion withdrawn

Motion 35 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 35 reads: That the SNC rectify the SPS position that during periods of suspension annual leave is automatically deducted as per the individual's roster.

Now, this seems to be a change of... it's not a change of policy. It seems to be a change of interpretation at our EACH team or our HRHQs or whatever you want to call them. At Edinburgh, unfortunately, we've had a number of gross misconducts, people suspended in the last year or so and it's come to light that the wording's slightly changed. So, regarding annual leave during suspension, back in June '22 the wording was more, 'During this period of suspension you may take annual leave as you wish.' But suddenly, in

April '23 the wording became, 'During this period of suspension rostered leave that falls during the period will be considered taken.' Acas guidelines are quite clear when you're suspended that everything is suspended and you can only take annual leave if you wish to, so you put in to take annual leave. Any rostered leave shouldn't be taken off you unless you actually say that, with the caveat, of course, if you do not take that leave it could be lost depending if the individual's suspended for a long period of time. So, what we want to clarify is what has changed or who's made that interpretation at SPS headquarters to change that view or change that opinion in the policy, 'cause the policy's not changed and the Acas guidelines haven't changed. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Glenochil, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks, Conference. We weren't quite sure where Edinburgh are coming from with this, until you've just got up and spoke there. All I'm going to say is that we're happy to support it. I'm not sure if it's peculiar to Edinburgh or if this is something else that is a bit wider spread than that, but pass the motion and give us the opportunity to go and have the conversation with the employer and then come back to it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Edinburgh, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? The motion's carried.

Conference, we're going to adjourn there for the night. Just a couple of notes going forward, we'll be tonight in the Not The Cocktail Bar, that's what it's called, 8:15 for pre-dinner drinks. Sorry, 6:15. That's 6:15.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: We'll get the total for what was raised last night later on and we'll announce it to Conference. So, thanks everybody for last night. Just before we go on with the agenda I'm looking to invite Jenny Carter-Vaughan from Affinity Select Insurance Services up, who are our broker for group life insurance. Jenny, thank you.

JENNY CARTER-VAUGHAN – AFFINITY SELECT INSURANCE SERVICES: Thank you for your time today. The POA Scotland Group Life Scheme is a fantastic example of active trade unionism at work. When governments and employers stand by the union's Group Life Scheme harnesses the collective power of members to look after and provide financial support to Scottish prison officers and their families in times of need. Because of your collective action your Group Scheme has, over 41 years, paid out more than £7 million to Scottish prison officers and their families. Money can't bring a loved one back but the scheme provides vital financial help to pay for funerals and other expenses in the early weeks and months after a bereavement. But what if we could do more? What if we could save a life? This is the aspiration at the heart of the new services that the Scottish Executive have negotiated for POA Scotland's Life Scheme members and their families.

We Care, My Strength and Tooth Fairy... I can't believe I'm standing here talking about tooth fairies to Scottish prison officers, are being provided free of charge to help and support POA Scotland Life Scheme Members, day-to-day health. The most important of these new benefits is We Care. We Care provides up to ten personalised counselling sessions for mental health issues. So, if a member has two mental health issues they're entitled to receive 20 personalised counselling sessions. The sessions are available to members of the scheme, they're immediate family and also their children. Imagine what this could do. What if collective the scheme can help save just one family or just one life by providing mental health support that they can't get elsewhere.

There are a number of other essential services which are detailed in this lovely leaflet, which I left on all your desks yesterday, and there are a load more by the office with Kathryn. I'd encourage you all to have a good read and download the apps, which are beautifully QR coded on the back there, to see what it is and how they work. They're all designed to meet gaps in health provision that many members will be experiencing today. Kathryn's going to be circulating a branch circular after Conference with information for the group Life members in your branch, including the personal access code so they, and their families, can begin to use the services. If you have members in your branch who are not in the Group Life Scheme, and there really aren't that many but there are some, this is a good chance to talk to them about it and how,

by joining, they can become part of a POA Scotland initiative that protects prison officers and their families all over Scotland.

Thank you ever so much for your time and also your hard work and support, but most of all, thank you very much for caring for your colleagues and being there.

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Jenny, and as we've said, there's going to be a circular on the back of Conference about it so it's maybe an idea, not just to get it out to already members of it, but use it as a resource to try and encourage more to join because it is worthwhile and it's really good, 'cause a lot of folks say, 'It's no use to me, I'm gonna be dead,' There's actually parts now where it is gonna be a use to them. Thanks for that, Jenny, thank you.

That was early for the first phone interruption. If we can make sure phones are off, please, as per Standing Order's request yesterday. Thank you. Moving on with the agenda.

Motion 37 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. This motion 37 will possibly go down like a led balloon. Anyway, it reads: An Edinburgh weighting payment should be introduced due to the extortionate cost of living and working within the Edinburgh boundaries. This would be similar to colleagues living and working in London.

Now, for the staff that work in Edinburgh, the cost of housing bucks the national trend and is still increasing, whereas in other parts of Scotland it's levelled out or the cost of living or cost of housing has gone down. This has forced a number of staff to move outwith the Edinburgh boundaries and seek housing elsewhere, further away from the workplace meaning more travelling, more time away from their family. We already have certain retention and recruitment allowances for various levels in the organisation, including senior managers, so all we'd be looking for is some sort of retention allowance Edinburgh weighting. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Do we have a

seconder for the motion? No seconder, the motion falls.

Motion 38 – Dumfries.

JASON HALL – BRANCH CHAIR, DUMFRIES: Chair, Conference. Motion 38 reads: That the Association challenges the Scottish Prison Service on the fact it does not have a specific policy dealing with disability.

There's been a few motions already making reference to people having to potentially come back to work when they're still ill, also the reasonable adjustments from Optima. These things could be addressed if there was a specific policy dealing with disability, 'cause that's where some of our issues in Dumfries have come in regards to reasonable adjustments. People who've got disabilities, there is some slight policies that touch on the subject but nothing specific. If the SPS had something specific there it could help guide HR and managers when dealing with things like this to help people get back to their work and make these reasonable adjustments. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Shotts, wish to speak. Anybody else wish to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Morning, Conference. On behalf of the SNC speaking in support of the motion. I can confirm that the SNC, and me in particularly actually, I'll actively challenge the SPS in the fact that it does not have a policy dealing with disability. Not just me, we all do it, but I'm on that group that I mentioned yesterday with Lee Currie and it came to Conference a couple of years ago that we should have a disability policy and we're currently working on it in the occupational health group. The next motion is very similar and I'll come onto that and not be specific about that, which is disability leave, which is mostly what people are concerned about when they have a disability, but not all, 'cause there's all sorts of reasonable adjustments and suchlike.

Currently we deal with disability under Section 13 of the Absence Management Policy. We believe that there should be a far more extensive standalone policy dealing with the issue. Some of the issues around disability, as I say, will be dealt with in the next motion, but I can confirm that technically the motion's been achieved 'cause we're actively

challenging the SPS to have a standalone disability policy. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Dumfries, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 39 – Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Motion reads: Conference as that the SNC engage in talks/action the introduction of the subsection 13.2 of the Attendance Management Policy, namely, Disability Leave Policy.

This came about at our establishment because there was a member of staff who was going through treatment for her disability, quite invasive treatment, and she was getting told by her FLM she had to go sick. One FLM decided, 'No, no we'll give you special leave.' And then she didn't know whether it was New York or New Year as far as where she stood. It eventually came to my desk because somebody in their wisdom decided to put her on a stage. So then I get involved and I said, 'No, there's a policy to deal with that.' And when I went digging, turns out there isn't. Turns out it's been written up and it should've been actioned, it should've been taken forward, and yes, we have the Disability Passport and we have that all put in, but this actually specifically deals with when an individual has a disability, has that registered disability and then has ongoing treatment or requirements the Prison Service should be robust enough to understand where it goes and give the people that need it the tools to help out with that, rather than make it ad hoc. Please support the motion. Thanks very much.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Morning, Conference. Speaking in support of the motion. As I discussed a wee bit in the last motion there, we're actively have an occupational health group, of which a couple of us are involved. It's actually myself and Karen sit on it from the SNC and we're having a bit of debate. We have a Disability Leave Policy already written in draft and it's just waiting approval and we're trying to cross the Ts and dot

the Is on it. It achieves most of what Billy's asking for or at least tries to because it's the way it's applied.

We have gone a wee bit further and we are trying to make sure that it's an all-encompassing Disability Policy, like Jason asked for. But, as it stands, we've got a draft Disability Leave Policy which does address some of the issues, Billy. We're just making sure we get it right. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Glenochil, right to reply? All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 40 – Perth.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion is asking that we: Mandate the SNC that excess leave days over 10 can be purchased due to not being given due to operational cover.

This actually came from the lockup meeting that we had to get Conference motions, and the chair was up, chair, it was a chair, aye. He was advising people at the same time, 'Remember to get your leave in.' 'cause there was a great big push in Perth to make sure your leave days were under 10 or you were going to lose them. All that we're asking for is why do we need to lose them? Why do we need to work short if there's an opportunity there? Other organisations will let staff buy leave back. We're not asking for loads, maybe one week, but it's another option rather than take it or lose it. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont, do you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Greenock.

DON MCGORY - GREENOCK: Asking you to reject the motion. The leave you've got, you're probably talking about a hundred years we fought to slowly get one of these benefits and that is the leave. Now, I know what Tony's saying, 'If you don't use it you lose it.' Well, that's not really true. If you put in for leave and you get it knocked back then you can carry it over so you don't lose it. Because of that and because of the years it's took to fight for 42 days leave. We want our members to get the leave and enjoy their time off, and if we start letting buy or sell their leave, then where does it

end? Does it become as daft as you get 42 days but if you want you can start selling us that back straightaway? No, I'd rather have members take their time off, and they can carry their leave over, but as long as they apply for leave and get told, 'No, you're not getting it', then they can carry it over at the end of the year. Please reject.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Anybody else wishing to speak? Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Speaking against the motion, and to reiterate what Don McGory has said, excess leave should be taken and people should be applying for it. So, as an SNC and as a POA, what we should be seeking is, again, a change in the 10 day rule so that people can, if they've more than 10 days leave, can take more, whether it be 15, 20, 25. That's what we should be seeking, not paying cash to take people's leave. A lot of this leave was accrued during the COVID times when people weren't taking leave and they should be entitled to it, so please reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Anyone else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC asking you to reject this motion. It would be remiss of this union to support a motion that would encourage some of our members not to take their allocated leave. We all know what pressures our members are under daily at work and we all know how it feels to have a break away from that and the benefits to your health and wellbeing. So, why would we want to offer up something that offers a cash incentive not to take your leave? I say this because a lot of us know, and don't kid ourselves, do you honestly not think that some of our members would either ask or be asked to cancel leave, knowing that they could sell their leave later. Truthfully, we know this would happen. This is why this motion must be rejected. Yes, we know that it can be difficult to get your additional leave, and that is the real issue, and it's been touched on by a couple of colleagues here. That is the problem. Now, if you can document that you have asked for your leave you can carry more than the 10. That's a fact and we seem to have missed that saying, 'Oh, we're losing days now.' But if you document that you have asked to take this leave and they can't

give you it you can take over 10. Local branches should remind members of the policy regarding leave and the courses of action open to them when they are refused. Conference, please reject this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Perth, right to reply.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Conference. Of course it's important that they get their leave and particularly the job that we're doing, it's really difficult, you need your time off. Nobody's arguing that. But when you're not getting the opportunity or you're getting a blatant threat, 'Take it or lose it.' Point taken that there were processes in play that you *might* be able to take it back. This motion's asking for us to give some autonomy back to staff. Maybe they don't, maybe they need the money. We're not asking that they lose every bit of their leave a week, something like that. Give some power back to the staff. Support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 41 – Dumfries.

ALISTAIR WILSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DUMFRIES: Morning, colleagues. Motion 41 reads: That the SNC seek to remove the probability award to any conclusion to an internal investigation if a court of law has decided on a verdict in any case involving an accused in the said investigation/case.

Firstly, I know employment law probability is in there. However, what this motion's asking for is when a person goes to court and it gets chucked out, that the SPS are not allowed to progress with the internal investigation. This came about because at Dumfries we had a court case that was thrown out after ten minutes and the sheriff said to the PF to stop flogging a dead horse and to provide him with some evidence to continue. The PF went away, came back, 'I'm not gonna progress this any further.' But that case had went on for nearly two-and-a-half years. When I went back to the gaol I was then informed by the governor that, 'Yes, I know the courts chucked it out. However, we're gonna go forward with this because there's a case to answer.' I understand the probability part of it all, it's in employment law, I understand that part. However, if a court of law says there's nothing

there, why is the SPS allowed to progress it? Is it a case of the governors, managers deciding that using the Code of Conduct Policy to get rid of bad staff or staff that they don't like? Because that would be the case what it was in Dumfries. Therefore, that's the part of the motion where we know that the probability part of it is in employment law. However, what we are asking for here is that when it goes to court and the court chucks it out and says there's no case to answer, not guilty, whatever it is, there's no evidence that the SPS cannot progress with the internal investigation. I'm probably gonna get people telling me, either up here or later on, that that's what normally happens in other gaols, but in Dumfries it doesn't. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion falls. Sorry, last minute, Edinburgh. Do you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Speaking on behalf of the SNC. I fully empathise with the sentiment behind this and I've brought similar motions in the past myself, but this is the very reason we're asking you to vote against this motion. We know, as has been said, that the balance of probability, where it sits, it's found within law, so that's what you're actually asking us to do. You're asking us to change the law. It isn't just about the Scottish Prison Service, it's about the employer. The employer uses the balance of probability in cases where there is a bad employee and if they get rid of that bad employee their business stops being damaged because of that. That's why it exists. It exists at that civil test to protect the employer. Now, our issues are more to do with how it's used and how it's abused, and it's down to us as branch officials to get better at learning exactly how the balance of probability works and holding our adjudicators to the test and to make sure that they show the reasonableness of their decisions in order to arrive at that decision. Colleagues, we won't get rid of the balance of probabilities because it's far too big a thing to ask, but what Dumfries is asking for is something very much more specific. It's only in this circumstances, and we get that, but it does still exist to protect the employer. We must make sure that we hold the employers' feet to the fire when they're making these adjudications, and we can get better at what we do. We do need to understand the balance of probabilities better; we have just gone through a case ourselves where the balance of probabilities is the main issue in this and, it's I'll look into the case,

but we aren't able to then look at the reasonableness of the adjudicator's decision. And when you look into that you'll find that you will be able to challenge them on their decision making. We can help people get better with this balance of probabilities judgement, and we need to, because it's, in some part, our failing. So, we're asking you to reject this motion, colleagues.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Dumfries, right to reply.

ALISTAIR WILSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DUMFRIES: I understand what Eddie's saying there, but the motion actually asks not for... I'm not wanting a change in law. It's not asking for a change in law. What it's asking for is that when it gets to the stage that it goes to court and the court chucks it out that the SPS, governors, managers, whoever it is, does not progress and move forward with it. It automatically gets put to the side and binned. That's all we're asking for here. We're not asking for any kind of change in employment law here, we're asking for a change in the process. And I understand what Eddie's saying about we need to get better, we need to do this, we need to do that. I understand that part of it, but for that probability part of it all, I just can't get my head round the fact that when a court chucks it out, the SPS has still got the right to take it forward and to find the guy guilty. They ended up sacking the guy, which is even worse, considering the court chucked it out after ten minutes and the sheriff was very critical of the PF at the time and that's where this comes from. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Conference, just before moving onto motion 42, I'd like to invite our National Chair, Mark Fairhurst, to address Conference please.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIRMAN POA UK: Chair, Scottish National Committee, Conference. It really is a pleasure to be back here in Scotland; I do enjoy coming to Scotland and addressing you all at your Conference. It's a refreshing change for me when you see what goes on sometimes at our Conferences. So, congratulations to everyone for the work you do. And you must be doing something right, John, because at the moment Scottish membership is the highest it's ever been. So that's

down to the work you're doing at a national level, and of course the way you promote the POA in your branches, so thank you very much for that.

I guess I want to start by thanking you all for everything you do, because you never get any thanks. Top table works tirelessly on your behalf – you mightn't agree with everything they do but they try their best for you. And I know you work tirelessly on behalf of your members in your branches doing an extremely difficult job in really trying circumstances. And let's be honest, the job's not getting any better. Violence is rocketing, again, we work in the most hostile and violent workplace of anywhere in the world. I'll never stop saying that and highlighting that in the media, because we do and we're expected to do that, to the ripe old age of 68. It's just impractical and cruel. We're not gonna accept it and we're gonna keep chipping away at whatever government's in power to try and get that retirement age reduced. I promise you that.

It's quite concerning that we all face the same problem. Across the border in England and Wales we've got exactly the same problems as you: recruitment and retention. And just look at the journey for a new recruit. So, you can join this job aged 18, you've got a retirement age of 68 which means you're expected to work on the frontline, in a uniformed emergency service, 'cause that's what we are, we're covered under legislation, for 50 years. 50 years on the frontline in a hostile environment workplace before you can draw a full pension or enjoy a full career. There's no other public sector body that expects their staff to work for 50 years dealing with the sort of traumas that we face on a daily basis. It's absolutely ridiculous.

And then, of course, look at what we're facing in England and Wales, which is coming your way 'cause I know you're quickly filling up to being highlighted by your Chief Inspector in her Annual Report. We are now in a situation where our prisons are that full in England and Wales that we're releasing criminals early. That's entirely down to the government. It was preventable, it was predictable. Their own experts told them, many, many years ago, that by 2025 you're locking up about 96,000. Could be more, doubt it will be less. We're a couple of years away from that – we're locking up 88,000 as we speak. So, what did the government do in their wisdom? They targeted us all with their austerity measures and budget cuts and they closed over 20 public sector prisons in England and Wales, many of them smaller prisons which were, at the time, high performing,

destroying people's lives forcing people to move. They closed them and they never replaced those spaces. I think as I speak now, over 13 years of Tory rule, they've supplied an additional 500 prison spaces but they've lost over 10,500 'cause of the closures. And now what's their plan? Their great master plan is to build more prisons, most of them farmed out to the private sector. There's got to be a level playing field.

The private sector are here to stay in England and Wales, and we get on well with the private sector; we've got some good relationships but there's got to be a level playing field. We want fit-for-purpose modern gaols. So, if you're going to build five new prisons then at least let's have two or three of them in the public sector, not four in the private sector and they've promised us one, come on? But you're gonna provide all these new modern prisons, how are you gonna staff them? We can't recruit anyone. Nobody wants to work in a prison anymore. Private sector have the same problem because, believe it or not, because of the recent pay rise we've just had, which was the highest for over 30 years, we're now paying more than the private sector so they've got to up their game. So, they're having the same problems as us. Quite sad that, isn't it? The highest pay rise we've ever had for over 30 years and it was 7%. For most people. Still below the rate of inflation. We're still way behind because of pay freezes, pay pauses, below inflation awards, because of a so-called Independent Pay Review Body that is chosen by the government and paid for by the government. So, let's see what happens with this round of pay talks.

We're still waiting for our remit letter by the way. So, by the end of this month we should have completed everything. If it was on track we should be giving our oral evidence, they should be considering it and roundabout January/February they send their report to the government so we can all paid in April. We haven't even had the remit letter from this government yet. That means that probably next month sometime, if we're lucky, they'll get the remit letter, then they'll be a rush job to get written submissions in by the end of the year, then probably February or March next year we'll be invited to give oral evidence, then they'll submit their report probably around June or July, then they'll be a recess and then they'll come back in September, then this time next year we'll probably get an awarded back-pay. That's no good to anyone. There's only one person to blame and that is the Prime Minister, because it's all on them, that's what we're waiting for.

So, we're releasing people 18 days early. It was only a temporary measure for two weeks but it's going to be a rolling two weeks. They've kept that quiet. Is it going to make much of a difference? No, it isn't. What have we released since it was announced? 90 people. What did we have in from new receptions from courts two weeks? 220. So, do the maths. It ain't gonna work, is it? And now they're offering incentives for foreign national prisoners, 'We'll release you 18 months early if you agree to go back to your country of residence.' But what they don't tell the public is, you've got to have the agreement of that country to accept them back, 'cause if they don't want them back, we've gotta keep them. So, we are in a complete mess. It's the biggest crisis I've ever experienced, it really is. As I say, we're all facing it aren't we; no matter where we work, we're all facing increasing levels of violence, and I know that spice is now becoming an issue in Scottish prisons. We had it for many years, there was an influx of it, it created chaos. It's nasty stuff. But it's very rare we have outbreaks of spice in prisons now. You know why? And this will happen in Scotland. It'll be a buzz and everybody will want it 'cause it's so cheap. Now we don't have that much in England and Wales because, and the prisoners will work this out, it's now seen as a dirty drug. It's now seen as a dirty drug, 'Oh, you don't want spice, it's a dirty drug. Don't want that. Heroin's just as cheap, we'll have that but we don't want spice.' And that will happen. You'll find this out, that'll happen in Scotland. You'll go through all the trauma, and all the hassle that it brings, and the violence, and the drain on resource. You'll go through that but eventually it'll die a death and something else will come in, because it'll be seen by prisoners as a dirty drug. They do their own peer pressure and you'll find it'll die down. I know what you're going through at the moment – it's horrible stuff.

I just want to talk on staff support, because there are more and more of my members being diagnosed with PTSD. The reason for that is two-fold. One) especially men, we don't talk, we bottle it all up. We don't talk at all, we don't seek help. That has to change. And two) there is really no support from the employer in my eye; there's no onsite support, yet we've got a 24-hour helpline, you can go to counselling sessions if you want them but there's really no support, is there? We rely on each other, we do our own training, we have practitioners and England and Wales. I know you call it something different in Scotland. I know I've just heard of what John setup, the Sanctuary. I think that's fantastic.

Absolutely fantastic! So, John, I just want to commend you for that. I think it's a brilliant idea and I think we should bring it in to every single gaol in the entire United Kingdom. A safe space for staff where we can go, we can offload, even if it's just with our colleagues, somewhere private and comfortable. I think it's fantastic. I'd like to see that rolled out. And I know you've put an article in the *Gatelodge*. I encourage you all to read it because, as I say, I fully support that. It's a fantastic idea.

It wouldn't have escaped your notice, would it, that we've had a bit of publicity over the past couple of weeks. That was due to an escape from Wandsworth Prison. We should never ever, ever have escapes in prisons and the reason we do is because of the pressure we'll all under. Now, there's no doubt when the internal investigation concludes there will be human error, of course there will, there's got to be human error when someone escapes. But, as I said in the media, 'Look at the bigger picture. Why has there been an escape? Well, one) they've got no staff. Two) when was the last time staff were trained in security procedures? Probably never. Three) what was the equipment like? What are the protocols in place like? How many corners are being cut?' I went in Wandsworth a couple of weeks ago to see how they were getting on. They're locking up 1600 and on the day of the escape they only had 64 staff on duty on the day of the escape. Now, when he escaped it was first thing in the morning, so they had even less 'cause we're all in patrol state. When I went in two weeks ago they had 94 staff on duty, 20 of those were detached, so they're now getting people from all over the country to go to difficult to recruit prisons on detached duty. So, realistically they only had 74 staff on duty, 'cause 20 were on detached duty because they can't keep the staff 'cause they don't pay enough, 'cause the working conditions are terrible, 'cause they're under pressure from managers.

And the problem is we've got people in charge of our prisons who wanna do too much with too little staff; they wanna run full regimes. It's impossible, you can't do it, something's got to give. And what I say to people now is, 'When something goes wrong, you'll get now support, they'll throw the book at you. They'll throw policy and procedure at you. And you know when they throw the book at you, it hurts! So, start throwing it back; stick to the policies and procedures.' And I've said to my members, 'Do not work alone on a landing.' If you're told to go and unlock that landing, 'Yeah, I'll unlock it, but I want my mate at my shoulder.

I'm not doing it on my own. I'll unlock that cell, you watch me and then we'll leapfrog each other.' And if that takes you six times as long as it should then so be it, let it take as long as it should. And when you go into cells to do checks, locks, bolts and bars, do it in pairs. 'I'll go in, I'll my check, you stand outside and watch me.' And that takes ten times as long as it should, so be it, it takes as long as it should because we are seeing a worrying trend of attempted hostages on staff. I read daily reports every day and something, 'I've tried to grab a prisoner into the cell – staff reacted.' But what happens if you're working alone and nobody knows that's happened to you? So, start to work safely, and I say to people, 'You will always get the support from this union if you work safely.' It's time to take back control of our prisons.

A true Zero Tolerance policy towards violence on staff means for every crime it gets reported, for every assault, whether it's injurious or not, we report it. Because even if you're not injured during assault, how do we know what effect it's had on you up here? There's got to be consequences for poor behaviour and that's what I keep installing into my members in England and Wales till they eventually get the message. And you don't realise, and your membership don't realise, how powerful you are. If you don't like the way it's getting done, then don't do it. If it's not safe, then don't do it. Stick together and make a stand. And I know you've got the right to strike here, which you haven't had to use yet, you've threatened it a few times. That's fantastic. That's what we're hoping for with a future government – will it be Labour? Who knows? Sir Keir's stood up, hasn't he, and said, 'I support the right to strike. The first hundred days in office, if we win the general election, I'll repeal all the anti-trade union legislation. There won't be thresholds, won't be minimum working standards when you go on strike.' Well, if he supporters the right to strike that's the right to strike for prison officers in England and Wales as well, and we will hold him to account.

I'll finish with this, Conference. Thank you so much for the invite, it's great to see you all. Let me tell you this, if you *ever* need to use that right to strike, I'll be there with you on the picket line. Solidarity to you all! Have a good Conference, thank you.

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Your addresses to this

Conference are always well received. Every time I hear how you are facing down there, I go with despair, because part of me thinks that we are years ahead of you, and actually in reality we could be years behind. So, we need to be very careful up here that we don't end up in the same situation as you are down there and it's our responsibility here to listen to the harrowing stories about staff shortages and make sure that we get it right up here. So, Mark, always welcome, thank you. Moving back on with the agenda.

Motion 42 – Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. The motion reads: This Conference mandates the SNC to seek dialogue with the SPS to rectify the oversight regarding disciplinary dismissals. Section 19 of the Conduct Policy states, 'That appeals against dismissal are to the internal Dismissal Appeal Board.' By some poorly worded part of the policy, members are not being paid whilst they seek an internal appeal against gross misconduct dismissals. Clarification and rectification should be sought.

This came about, and this motion has been brought about, because we had a member who went through the process, was dismissed by a governor, said they could go to an IDAB, and then there was a delay, then there was a further delay, then there was a further delay. I went back and I said to the SNC, 'Why is this individual not getting any pay or whatever else?' 'Well, 'cause he's been dismissed.' I went, 'But if you go through the dismissal process for a misconduct that puts you through stages, when you got to stage 4, I believe, if you are then dismissed whilst you're waiting on appeal you will still be paid.' Now, part of this came about because there was a member of our Prison Service who has gone 18 months without payment. He waited nearly 13 months to get his IDAB heard, and yet, he was left with no income, which is an internal appeal process. And the key part of this is it's an internal appeal process, but he's already been dismissed. So, the Prison Service washes their hands of him or her, whoever, the member and then we don't have a process in place that says, 'Hang on there now, get it done in an appropriate time, we'll pay your wages and we'll see it through.' Because I'll tell you right now, and this is cynic in me, if the Prison Service had kept paying his wages I'm pretty sure it wouldn't have taken 18 months. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Do we have seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we ask you to support this motion. This change to a policy, as you all know, was a result of the SPS following other government agencies, whose policy is to cease payment of salary once a decision is made to dismiss. Previously, an individual was paid until the appeal process was exhausted, as Billy alluded to there, the decision by the SPS to adopt this change to policy was no doubt financially driven, probably in part due to the time that it had taken to complete these appeal processes. We know how difficult it will be to achieve this motion, 'cause of the financial side of it. That said, it will not stop this union from seeking change to the current policy. Conference, please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Glenochil, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Conference, just before we move onto the next motion, we've got the sum raised for the Trussell Trust. So, between the collections last night and donations from the National Welfare Committee and Finance Committee, the grand total that we've raised to go to the Trussell Trust is £4,372. Phenomenal!

<Applause>

Also, a thanks to everyone that brought stuff for the food collection as well. I don't know if anybody's seen it, but when you are getting your tea shortly in the Regence room across there, have a look in. The donations of food are outstanding, overwhelming as well. Round of applause, again please, for that for yourselves.

<Applause>

Motion 43 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Morning, Chair, SNC, Conference. Feeling confident with this one. Motion 43 reads: That this union seek to change the Code of Conduct policy, namely the option, 'Decided to dismiss the

employee’, written in the Code of Conduct policy at 11.4, Stage 4: Dismissal, to also include the option **not** to dismiss the employee.

Conference, first I just want to point out there’s a spelling mistake there – the word decided is actually decide. Bit cryptic but I’ll explain this. The phrase the motion refers to is included in the Code of Conduct policy at 11.4 and that’s specifically about managing people who are already on a final written warning. So, if a member who’s currently on a final written warning, who is then found guilty of a misconduct, no matter how trivial, the only two options currently open to the governor, according to the policy just now is, ‘Decide that no sanction is appropriate and complete the Notification of Decision of no Disciplinary Case to Answer or dismiss the employee.’ We had a case where the governor dismissed a member of staff with a 25 year career in exactly these circumstances over something that would normally have just registered as a verbal warning, just because, in her words, ‘The policy did not give her an option not to dismiss’, if she found that there was still a case to answer. Colleagues, of course the option not to dismiss should be a choice open to any governor as there are clearly circumstances where dismissal isn’t always the appropriate action to take. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Colleague, you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. You’ll be glad to hear, Malky, we are obviously supporting your motion. Conference, we ask you to support the motion for all the reasons already given by my colleague from Low Moss. Legally, the belief is that when a member is on a final written warning this should not automatically result in their dismissal, if given a further award at a future disciplinary hearing. We believe a change in the wording of the policy will clear up any room for interpretation from the GIC or whoever. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Low Moss, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion’s carried.

Motion 44 – Low Moss. Conference, looking for permission to withdraw. Conference accept that, all those in favour. Any against? Motion’s withdrawn.

Motion 45 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 45 reads: Operational C Band officers should naturally progress to D Band officers, if they wish to do so, through service rather than assessment process, subject to satisfactory performance reports.

There’s a number of operations staff at Edinburgh, who believe that the process to progress, and they see it as a progression rather than a promotion because you are just moving from being an operations officer to a residential officer, shouldn’t be seen as a promotion, it should be a progression. They would prefer it to be a natural progression through reports. It puts a wee bit of onus on the first line managers to do constructive and good reports, but they still believe that there shouldn’t be assessment processes or shouldn’t be psychometric tests or interviews just to progress from being an operations officer to a residential officer. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont, you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. We’re asking you to reject the motion. Colleagues, we can’t ask the employer to depart or ignore the recruitment guidelines, and the employer won’t depart from the recruitment guidelines. I hear what Edinburgh are saying and I know there’s a lot of frustration out there, but it seems to be that frustration is what’s driving this change into believing this is a progression. It still exists as a promotion and it still has to be the best candidate for the role, and for that reason we can’t ask the SPS to do that and they won’t, so we won’t achieve this motion. Please vote against the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Edinburgh, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion’s lost.

Motion 46 – Edinburgh. Conference, permission to withdraw 46, please show. Any against? Any abstentions? Motion’s withdrawn.

Motion 47 – Low Moss.

PAUL HAGAN, LOW MOSS: Morning Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 47, this reads: The union seek to ensure if a member of staff acts up for more than two years then they should substantively assign to that grade they’re acting up to.

The motion speaks for itself. The policy is clear, staff shouldn’t be acting up for more than six months. However, it’s happening everywhere with no incentive for the employer to fill the post substantively. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion falls.

Motion 48 – Stirling.

MARK O’HARE – BRANCH SECRETARY, STIRLING: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion reads: During the C-D promotion process, if the group exercise is passed then it should be valid for 12 months.

Now, we’ve had this with a lot of operational staff where they’ve passed all the process and then failed their interview and then they have to go back to the start. Obviously it’s a waste of time and resource and it’s disheartening for the staff. So, please support this motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Stirling. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference, supporting this motion. We recently had five candidates from C-D going for a D Band job. All successful, passed the board, jumped through all the hoops that was required of them and one person got the job. Six weeks later another job came up and the same staff reapplied again for this job and got told they have to jump through *every single hoop* all over again. And what this is doing is just demoralising staff who’ve already passed this, so I fully support this motion. If they’ve done everything that’s required of them they should have that 12 months to actually have free grace on it. Please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anybody else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we support this motion. In fact, we feel that a timeframe should not be placed on it. As you’ll be well aware, not so long ago when our colleagues were successful at promotion boards, they were given a ticket which was valid for 12 months, similar to what this motion asks for. This is no longer the case and when someone has successfully passed the promotion board for C-D there is no timeframe put on it or a so-called ticket. We feel the same conditions should be given to individuals who have passed the group exercise and we ask Conference to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Low Moss, right to reply. Stirling, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion’s carried.

Motion 49 – SNC motion. William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: The motion reads: This Conference mandate the SNC to engage with the SPS on options to roll out soft cuffs to all establishments given the positive feedback from the establishments who were involved in the C&R pilot.

Chair, Conference, having been involved in the current C&R pilot it’s been obvious, even for someone who, like myself, was sceptical. And Conference, I know I wasn’t alone. About the benefits soft cuffs would bring. I can honestly say that these cuffs have been a hugely significant factor in the reduction of recorded incidences to our colleagues, who suffer routinely injuries during these removals. The use of these cuffs has shown to aid de-escalation, a source of injury, both to us and the individuals who were restrained. The evidence demonstrating large reductions in reportable injuries are routinely collated and presented by the Violence and Restraint Reduction Managers, the VRR, which you’ll see in the establishment. These are rolling out, these posts. See in our steering group meetings, routinely we get these figures and the figures don’t lie, colleagues, they don’t lie; the reduction in injuries is actually... if you didn’t actually see the fact you wouldn’t believe such a large reduction could take

place just because of these cuffs, and obviously see now too when it rolls out.

Conference, anything that helps make our workplace safer must be supported, and for that reason we brought this to Conference and I'm asking you to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Have we got a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? All those in favour, please show. Any against? Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 50 is now the composite motion which will be Perth and Polmont to second.

TONY QUINN - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion's asking: That the Conference mandate the SNC to seek to have extra variable cover built into all establishment compliments to reflect the increase in maternity leave cover and the additional leave entitlement for staff with 5 years' service or over.

I think cover for maternity leave on an additional variable has been here time and time again and it's still not on the compliments, but it's not going away. Currently we have got 12, I think, 12 staff who cannot work operational on the frontline or aren't at their work because they're on maternity leave with no variable to cover them. The motion makes sense, please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Polmont. Anybody else wishing to speak? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I've been banging this drum for years. I sat down with a member of directorate going on our staff compliment and all the rest of it and highlighted the anomaly with the leave. I highlighted the anomaly with the pregnancy and I was told, 'Yeah, we'll look at it but it's got cost so we're not going to do it. We just need to absorb it locally', and all the rest of it. It's not good enough. It means we run short. It means every establishment runs short. It means when it comes to a point when managers and staff are looking at an individual and the first thing you're asking, you shouldn't be asking this, when a young female member of staff ... 'Might end up getting pregnant. We're not gonna have anyone to cover her.' And when you get to a stage where

you've actually got your full entitlement to your leave, the variable's not built in to cover the amount of staff that need the leave because they rely on younger staff being in for that shortfall in that leave to cover that variable, which isn't happening. So, we need it changed, we need it rectified. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion. It asks for two things here, it asks for a variable for maternity and variable for the extra leave after five years. We're all very much aware of a need for an increase to the maternity variable, it's just the dynamics of the way we are now, and it quite clearly and obviously has to be addressed. Also, the right to leave entitlement after the five years was never addressed at the time. To be fair though, the SPS have committed to us that they're going to have a review of variables sometime in the very near future, and I spoke to one of our HR colleagues last night actually talking about variables, and they are committed to doing so. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Perth, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 51 – Edinburgh. Conference, permission to withdraw. All in favour. Any against? Any abstentions? Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 52 – Perth.

PAUL COPELAND - PERTH: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion reads: Mandate the SNC to engage with the employer that staff have support leaving and collecting pensions within proposed timescales.

Conference, it's not too much to ask that after years of service staff leaving can expect their pension to be in the bank on their retirement day. Sadly, this is still not happening for everyone. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Perth. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Glenochil, wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Fully in favour of this motion because we've just recently had it where a member of staff put in for their retirement, partial retirement process wasn't followed, things weren't happening and it left a large gap. But he wasn't the only one, and I went back and I went and checked through. I've got a member of staff right now who's partially retired, and it's not down to just my CSP and other things that come with it, still don't have their pension. I mean he goes and asks somebody to help him out and gets hit with a fob off and it's even worse when you retire. If you retire and you go out the door it's basically the SPS goes, 'Yeah, thanks very much but that's up to you to sort that out with my CSP.' This person could've worked for the Prison Service for god knows how many years. They need a bit of support it should be an onus on the employer to do that. I'm pretty sure legislation says somewhere on that lines, I've not looked into it that much, but please support this motion. We need to do better for our members, SPS needs to do better for its employees, especially when it comes to their person. Takes us long enough to get it so we should be getting the help when we need it. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. We're in support of this motion. Thanks very much to Perth for bringing it. There's a lot of things this motion does to support people at that time where we need to help and understand the situation that they're in. A lot of people don't understand pensions. It's nothing too technical, it doesn't ask for financial advice. It's an excellent motion, please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Perth, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 53 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES - INVERNESS: Chair, Conference. The motion reads: Conference instructs the SNC to negotiate that ex gratia are paid a week in arrears instead of a month in areas.

Colleagues, staff in some areas are waiting nearly two months before receipt of ex gratia. For instance, if a member just misses the cut-off date for submission of the ex gratia return to the pay section, that member of staff will now have to wait another month before the pay section receives it, and then he waits another month before it appears in his pay packet. In this current economic climate waiting these two months for your money is surely unfair and the process needs to be speeded up to reduce the financial hardships suffered by our members. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion. Thanks Inverness, for bringing this, it's a good motion. However, the motion may be hard to fully achieve given it is quite tight timescales, however, that doesn't mean that we should not be negotiating with the employer to achieve this. Hopefully, as you all know, we're soon to introduce a digitalisation of the process and hopefully that'll make it work much quicker and it'll be paid much more timely. Please support the motion. It's a good motion, thank you Inverness.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Inverness, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 54 – Low Moss.

PAUL HAGAN - LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 54: This union seek to ensure that staff promoted within six months of reaching their increment date receive that increment.

Colleagues, currently the Pay Policy states that for someone who's been promoted substantively, provided they've been in post for a minimum of six months they will automatically move to the next pay point, but those under six months don't and they'll have to wait a full year before they move up the ladder again. Surely it makes it a fairer process if there's no barrier in place, they move up. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a

seconder for the motion? Glenochil, you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. This motion that Low Moss has brought bears similar resemblance to one we just voted on yesterday, which was to talk about pay scales and when you get promoted up and the pay points. This is not quite a pay point but it's a barrier that should not be there for an individual who's went through a process to get promoted, to go into a job, to go into a role and then be financially penalised because there's this thing here that says, 'If you don't have it in place' or 'if you don't have it for this period of time we are not going to pay you that money.' So, we can have somebody, as it was pointed out the other day there, two days before that cut-off date they'll get the money, the person two days after it, you're not getting the money 'cause you've not been in post for that long so you'll wait a further period of time till you get round before you go onto that pay progression point that the person that got the job two days before you gets. It's not right, it's not fair, and it shouldn't be happening and us, as a union, we should be trying to balance that out to make sure that either we change how the process works so it falls within those time frames or we change what's being asked. Fully support this motion. Thanks Low Moss for bringing it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference. Conference, we're asking for a remit on this motion and I'll just try and explain why. If the motion is asking for a promoted member of staff to move to the next increment of the promoted pay band, then there could be a potential there that they would leapfrog other staff that's within that pay band. We need to bear in mind when somebody's promoted they do get a percentage rise of the pay band that they're going into. We're not saying we're ignoring this, and it's the same Billy point out, there was motions yesterday, I think it was motion 2 and motion 3, and we asked for a remit on motion 3 and it kind of falls into the same context as motion 3. What we need to try and move forward is something that's balanced and reasonable and it doesn't disadvantage any other group of staff or any member of staff, and it's on that basis that we're asking for the remit.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Low Moss, do you accept the remit? Conference, accept the remit. All those in favour. All those against. No abstentions? Remit's accepted, thank you.

Motion 55 - SNC motion, William Reid is going to speak on it.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Conference, motion 55 reads: This Conference reaffirms our policy position on open Voluntary Lateral Transfer Policy. We further mandate the SNC to engage with the SPS to discuss options to achieve further progress in pursuit of our policy, including opportunities to have the scheme opened up on a more frequent basis, if open ended application can be achieved.

Chair, Conference, moving this motion on behalf of the SNC. Conference, the SNC brings this motion to Conference asking that this committee was contacted some time ago with regards to opening the Voluntary Lateral Transfers or VLTs as we know them. Many reasons were given for this, personal and financial being among them. At the time myself and previous SNC member, Willie Carol, brought this to the Workforce Planning Group as we were both members of this group. At the time we were met with a reluctance, shall we say, due in part because of the added workload that the recruitment team in the SPS had 'cause of the need to prioritise the women's estate and also the ongoing recruitment policy reluctance at Grampian. That said, we did achieve some sort of assurances that once these issues had been addressed, they would make a commitment to open the VLTs. This they did for a limited period in March this year – 18 individuals were granted their VLT. Having spoken in person to these individuals, and getting written correspondence from some individuals, I can say that the transfers had nothing but a positive effect on them and the impact on their lives and their family.

Conference, this committee is asking you to support the union's commitment to our colleagues who wish to access Voluntary Lateral Transfers on a more regular basis. Conference, please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Do we have a seconder? Glenochil, you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, Conference. I'm going to say thanks to the SNC for bringing this motion forward. We're in a situation where we've got staff who have complex requirements, whether that be social economical, mental health, physical health, all these kind of things. And we need to be, as an organisation, and I mean POA and the SPS, robust enough to deal with it. Voluntary Lateral Transfers should be open. They should be sitting there, it should be you apply for it, you say, 'Listen, I wouldn't mind going to work there', for whatever reasons, 'shortness of travel, just fed up here, I want a wee change, I want a move.' It shouldn't be a hardship. It used to be, for those of us that remember, the other way round – the Prison Service used to come to you with a brown envelope and say, 'I want you there, we're going to move you there.' We fought that because that was unfair. Now we've got it the other way round, where it's actually unfair 'cause we're gonna force somebody to work at an establishment where they have mental health issues, traumas, not getting on with people, whatever it is or financial implications because they're not allowed to work from home, they've gotta travel 50 miles, their T&S has ran out, all these things. And I get it. The Prison Service don't want people to leapfrog T&S, leapfrog TNS. But we're not asking for that. We're asking for this to be a thing of: open it up, leave it running and let it be something that the membership has that power to say, 'I want to change, I'd like a change, please help me get a change.' Please support this motion. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? Greenock.

DON MCGRORY – GREENOCK: Asking you to support the motion. It seems that if there's a complicated, convoluted process, we were talking about promotion earlier on, then the SPS will find it. A cynic might think it's to justify people's existence, wherever they're hiding, I don't know, but processes that take months. I started in the English service and when you wanted to transfer to a gaol you wrote to that gaol and you just got put on a waiting list. How can it not be... I'm saying, make it even more simple. Not this process that involves, I don't know how many people, and drags on for months, and you've got the power of the governor of the establishment, when the person wants to leave, who says, 'By the way, you're not leaving' 'cause we had a member of staff who's from Greenock, who's working in BarL and wants

to come down to Greenock, but his governor says, 'No, we need you more.' So he doesn't get moved to Greenock. Whereas if you had a process where you just write to the gaol you want to go to, they say, without any bother, 'Next place comes, you're down' or if there's a waiting list, 'You're number six on that waiting list', and it just works its way down and then you're next and you go. To me that's an even more simple process and it stops the governor at the gaol you want to get out stopping you getting out. Support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Anybody else wishing to speak? All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 56 – Stirling. Conference, looking for permission to withdraw that motion. For. Any against? Abstentions. Motion's withdrawn.

Conference, just before we break for our 15-minute tea and coffee break, we've reached that time in the agenda where we're going to show a bit of respect to members that have died over the past year. So, if you're able, could I ask you to be upstanding for a minute's silence?

Members are: Graeme Mackenzie, Edinburgh; Robert Pews, Glenochil; James Maguire, Dumfries and Pauline Kerr, Perth.

<Minutes silence>

Thank you, Conference. As I say, we're going to break now.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Carrying on with the agenda.

Motion 57 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 57 reads: The union request that SPS formally recognise the increased use and introduction of illicit drugs being introduced to the prisons and the additional stresses that it is placing on staff.

Conference, we're all aware of the situation affecting our members on the frontline, particularly as the drugs and the methods of introduction in their concealment become more and more sophisticated. Figures released this year show that 1,832 Scottish prisoners were caught with drugs in the year 21/22. Now, that's up from 152 in 2014/15.

By my calculation that's over a 1000% increase in seven years! Now, whilst the SPS have acknowledged publicly that there's an issue, it's disappointing that they're not prepared to fight for the resources to deal with the problem. An FAI earlier this year, following the death of a prisoner who died as a result of NPS, SPS's Head of Operations and Public Protection stated that they'll be no increase in cell searches from the minimum three times a year, despite the figures I've just quoted you there. By getting the SPS to formally recognise this issue, and by that we mean tackling the problem head on, putting in place policies and initiatives, and not just focussing solely on recovery in the hope that that alone will somehow reduce the demand for drugs in prisons. We're then in a much better position to reduce the burden more quickly and effectively on our already beleaguered colleagues. I ask you to please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Can I have a seconder for the motion? Glenochil, you wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Members that I spoke to at our gaol wanted me to support this motion because drugs are a part of prison life, which unfortunately we say, 'No, it shouldn't be', and all the rest of it. But we don't have a robust system in place right now that actually takes some of that stressors off our members and the staff that work at it. It was highlighted to a member of staff I went and spoke to who said, 'Well, I found X and found Y and this person's been a user of NPS. He's been on report more times than anyone else but nothing seems to get done about it. I'm now stressed out because every time I come in or search them we're finding this stuff.' And what that members said to me was, 'I can't understand why he's not getting prosecuted.' And I was like, 'Well, he should be.' 'Doesn't seem he is.' And this is not to say we're not doing it, but as staff members we're expected to do searches, we're expected to do this, we're expected to look after them, we're expected to make sure that we do things properly and process it. But when we find illicit articles or we have an influx of illicit articles, as an employee of the Prison Service, I expect that to be followed right the way through to the nth degree and we should be doing that wholeheartedly within our guidelines. This helps, this helps this union say to our employer, 'Please recognise what your staff, our members, have to deal with on a daily basis that

needs rectified.' That's what it needs done, so please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Conference, fully supporting the motion. And just to say, the SPS don't not recognise. They do recognise the difficulties with drugs. They've made a lot of in-roads recently as well, as you'll know, with clothing and mail and all that sort of stuff and some of it's been remarkable. So, they do recognise it, please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Low Moss, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

OK, moving onto Polmont's motion being 57a.

Motion 57a - Polmont

JOHN DOWELL – BRANCH SECRETARY, POLMONT: Chair, Conference. 57a motion reads: SNC seek a change in the current promotion process. Applications for promotion should first go through a member of staff's line manager so the application can be verified as authentic and true.

It's the case now that an application form can have anything written on it and there's absolutely no way to verify if that's true. We think that's wrong; it should be more robust than that. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Polmont. Do we have a seconder for this motion? No seconder, motion falls.

Motion 57b – Polmont.

JOHN DOWELL – BRANCH SECRETARY, POLMONT: Chair, Conference. 57b reads: The SNC seek the SPS to form a working group to look at best practices in the promotion of staff taken from external companies with a view of changing the current process within the SPS.

The current practice just now for the SPS if you go for promotion is a one-hour interview, and if you can be great at interviews, you're getting the promotion. We've seen staff that's acted up for two/three years that can fall to bits. Brilliant at their

job – fall to bits at an interview. Their PPMS isn't taken into account, their acting up isn't taken into account and we think that's wrong. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Polmont. Do we have a seconder for this motion? Shotts, wish to speak? Anyone else wishing to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. Colleagues, we're asking you to reject the motion. You can see the common underlying theme here with the frustrations. This is asking for something slightly different in terms of promotion, however. But this will sit with the SPS and for ourselves to discuss with SPS. I know one reasonably large organisation and one public body, and I know their recruitment processes, and if we looked at them it'd be a complete waste of time 'cause they're not the best either. We can resolve these things and we are working on these things at the minute. This isn't the way to go and it's another layer that's unnecessary, so please reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Polmont, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 57c – Polmont.

TAM COFFEY – BRANCH CHAIR, POLMONT: Chair, Conference. This motion reads: To have an additional internal process in place for C-D promotions. This would save time and money to invest in the staff that we've got within our establishments and done through their PPMS grades. I ask you to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Polmont. Do we have a seconder? Dumfries, do you wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, Conference, the SNC are asking you to reject the motion. What the motion's asking for is an additional internal process. Given the fact that we already have a process internally, would it mean that we would have two processes then if we achieved what the motion was asking for. The SNC can't see the justification for pursuing a second process. We

could see the point if we were asked to review the current process in order to make it more efficient, because it is asking for a more efficient process to save time and money. But under the current wording we would ask you to reject it as we can't see that a second process being any more efficient.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Polmont, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 58 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 58 reads: The union request SPS to increase the training and support that staff require to adequately address the additional challenges on detecting and preventing the introduction of illicit articles.

Conference, prisoners have upped their game considerably in the last few years. They have no problem using the most up to date and technological ways, not only to manufacture their drugs, but introduce them and conceal them, and they're at least prepared to pay for the resources to achieve their objectives. Meanwhile, back in the SPS we appear to be stuck in the dark ages. We actually consider it a success when we recover a crash landed drone completely by accident. Worryingly, you've got to ask how many successful and undetected attempts did that drone have before it crashed. SPS need to get organised. The only training we get, if we can call it that, is the odd photo from a successful search, maybe when a unique method of concealment or introduction has been used, and that's it. There doesn't appear to be any cohesive plan or framework and we're effectively using much of the same methods and equipment that we had in the twentieth century. Any new technology we get, like body scanners, rapid scans, appear to take an absolute age and require a huge amount of effort and bureaucracy and justification before it finally arrives in establishment.

The Justice Secretary in a visit to HMP Edinburgh earlier this year stated, 'We should do everything we can to disrupt the supply of drugs, both within prisons and our community.' Colleagues, that everything we can starts at supplying adequate training, support and resources for our members, so please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Perth, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. Colleagues, we're speaking entirely in support of the motion. Any training and support that we can give for anything at all is necessary for us and we fully support Low Moss' motion. Please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Low Moss, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion. All those against. Abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 59 – Barlinnie.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. Just straightforward, motion 59 reads: The SNC update Conference on the review of the SPS gender policy. It's a straightforward one.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Austin. Obviously it's just an update so we don't need a seconder. Jim McCabe on behalf of the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. So, this gender/transgender policy, for years we've managed transgender prisoners, 10/14 years and more. It was always done on a volunteers' basis with our female officers if they volunteered, went along and searched transgender prisoners. Then one group of managers decided that they would try and force the female officers in that establishment that they would, 'You will, I'm gonna order you', came through 'cause that's kind of been the way for 20-odd years, however, that's what was happening. When this was raised it gave serious concerns for the safety of our female officers.

Scottish Prison Service and the trade union side met to discuss a policy, attempted to develop one and they actually put some good ideas forward and one of the ideas was everything should be based on risk, risk should be the first thing, no individual's rights or what they want to be recognised as, but the risks. The major risk for us was any person coming to prison who wants to be recognised through the transgender, if they had committed crimes against females then they're a risk to their

female officers. We could never get an agreement because it always seemed to hinge on search. So, we sought legal opinion and the lawyers came back and unless a prisoner has a Gender Recognition Certificate then they believe it is illegal for our female officers to search biologically-born men. And if you know, there's one case ongoing where a female officer, who again, was ordered by a manager to search a biologically-born man and she's now taking action against him.

So, our position is, and legal opinion, we will not allow our female officers to be forced to search biologically-born men. That's the update.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Jim.

Motion 60 – Dumfries.

ALISTAIR WILSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DUMFRIES: Morning, Conference. Motion 60 reads: That this Conference debates the benefit of the POA in Scotland still being the representative body for the operational first line managers in the Scottish Prison Service.

I know it's controversial but it's more mischievous than anything else. As you well know, the two previous pay offers that were put on the board and passed came in with a slightly smaller percentage for first line managers and a non-consolidated lump sum. The member felt this was unfair. When this was put forward, we subsequently got the new pay deal and obviously that's still going through the ballot process but it still throws up a few things. The concern that we have is that FLMs get treated as a bit like the meat in the sandwich, as far as the POA's concerned, particularly when they're carrying out fact-finding investigations, they are the bad person, they don't get no support, even though they're members. That element of it all is they're getting pushed from the top and they're also getting pushed from the bottom and we tend to be classed as the bad people.

The question back to the motion was: does the POA represent this small group, 'cause it is a small group, to the best of their ability? Personally, I think they do, however, this debate has brought to the table based on pay offers and based on the treatment that some FLM's get when they're carrying out fact-finding investigations. I know there's good and bad in the grade, same as there is in D Band, same as there is in C Band; some people get power hungry, some people don't, some people

do their job. But it's an integral part of the FLM role that we carry out fact finding investigations and that lack of support that people deem to get from the POA has been highlighted on more than one occasion, particularly at Dumfries. I, myself, carried out fact finding investigations as part of my role, I didn't get any support but I never asked for it, however, it's a difficult position for any FLM to be in. Please take part in the debate. (I've not got my glasses so I can't read that last bit)

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Dumfries. Anybody wanting to join the debate? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I think they do support all grades. At Glenochil I've had conversations with B Bands, I've had conversations with Cs, Ds, Es, Fs; just recently I helped an F Band who was a member going through a very traumatic period of time and all the rest of it, and actually yesterday pinged me a text, which I was going to bring my phone up but I've switched it off, which said, 'Thanks very much for the support. Thanks very much for the help. We'll see where it goes going forward.' That's an F Band. The E Bands that work at my establishment, I've got to say, I've got a good working relationship with them, they do fact finding, they do all these things. The biggest thing I've said, and I've said this to HR, I've said it to higher management within Glenochil prison, 'If you're gonna give somebody fact finding to do or some investigation, make sure they're trained, make sure they know what they're doing and make sure they do it appropriate and properly. A balanced approach to how it works. Nay agendas, nay all this kind of stuff, that's where that issue and problem happens.' We, as a union, have supported all grades right through since I've been in the job and we do it really well. Yes, there's individuals where it falls down by the wayside, but normally that's personality clashes or something's not been done or followed properly, proper process. This is something that we should be proud of because we are an all-encompassing union and we should always remain that way. Join the debate.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Greenock.

DON MCGRORY – GREENOCK: Down the years obviously worked with good FLMs and also not so good FLMs. I would say that down the years as well I've had more problems dealing with FLMs than I have with senior management; how they deal

with some staff, particularly op staff when some of the power hungry or power mad FLMs get that position of being in charge of junior staff. What I would say is, and I know it'll never happen, I'll be controversial for a change. If the union was starting today then I wouldn't have FLMs in our union, because their management – some are good and some are bad, but the bottom line is they've got manager on their badge and they're management. If this union was starting today I don't think we should be representing. That's my opinion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Glad you're only gonna be controversial, Don. Polmont.

JOHN DOWELL – BRANCH SECRETARY, POLMONT: Chair, Conference. Being an operational FLM and being in this role for 31 years, and a union member for that entire 31 years, yes, FLMs should be in the union. They deserve to be in the union. Any member of staff deserves to be in the union, you can't stop that. I always feel fully supported by the POA. It's an actual fact that I'm now a PLR with another FLM at Polmont supporting staff and any member, B, C, D and F.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Polmont. Shotts.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. I think it's on the basis of how you get on at your local branches depending on the support levels that you offer or are required. Very rarely do I get an FLM coming in and asking for support when they're doing fact finding or doing any other aspects of their job, it genuinely happens about pay and the concerns about pay that they don't seem to be getting a same equivalent as the D Bands are getting, but they wear white shirts. I've also got members who wear suits, who pay their dues. So, like any trade union, we should be there to support anybody who pays their dues into this union, because that's what they're there for, for their time of need and the time of need can vary. Yes, there's good FLMs, and yes, there's bad FLMs, but it's incumbent upon us, as the representatives, to guide them down the correct path to point out where the floors are in some of the logic. I think predominantly, as a union, we do that really well. It's rare at Shotts that we have a fallout with the FLMs when we're dealing with controversy or anything like that and we support as best we can, but we'll always, always support for the right reasons, the right rationale and utilising

the policies and procedures in our endeavours to do so. Just my wee opinion on it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anyone else wishing to take part in the debate? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference. The SNC believe absolutely we are the right union for the FLMs, and I'm glad to hear Dumfries and some of the other branches have confidence in our union. The debate is around the benefit that the POA in Scotland still being the representative body for operational FLMs in the SPS. So, a few points of fact, and some of the speakers have touched on those points, and I'll just go into them again. Some haven't been covered. 'The POA has the negotiating rights for this group of staff and this is recognised with the employer.' I think that's quite an important point. 'This group of staff have access to the same benefits as our other members.' Another important point; I've not heard anything to suggest otherwise. 'This group of staff are subject to the same union rules and constitution when they're members of a democratic union.' And I've not heard anything there to suggest otherwise. A point of fact. I must also point out something about this union, our union. Our union is independent from the employer in three main areas, and we should never forget that: financially we're independent, hence the need to pay our monthly dues; policymaking, hence the need to make union policy at this Conference; electing branch officials. And we often see FLMs as part of branch structure and function and participating in Annual Conference. Hands up all the FLMs here today representing members. I count six... Tony's hiding. So, I count seven. Seven from out of 30 – I would say that's not a bad ratio. How many members of staff do you manage as an FLM, 10, 12? I would say that there's a smaller ratio. There's more representation here for FLMs than there is for staff if you look at the ratios.

I wouldn't be surprised in the slightest, and Dumfries touched on it, a bit of mischief making. If this debate was first suggested to be debated by either members of an alternative union or by someone else who's not a member of the union but employed with SPS. And the motivation would be to divide and weaken this union. Let's not give those outside this union, our union, the opportunity to influence how we represent all members of the union, no matter what their pay grade.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John and thanks for the debate.

Motion 61 - SNC

Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks, Chair, on behalf of the SNC. This motion looks to: Welcome the imminent transfer of HMP Kilmarnock into the public sector, which takes place on 17th March 2024 and to welcome our new colleagues into the SPS. What we're looking for Conference to do is endorse the SNC putting in place a plan to reinvigorate the branch at HMP Kilmarnock and assist a new committee with branch structures, recruitment and early negotiations with the SPS during the transition period.

Some of you will remember that we formed a branch at Kilmarnock many, many years ago at Conference and they were up and running for a short period of time and a couple of guys who ran the committee, obviously with no facility time or recognition rights, but they kept that going for a period of time and it fell away. Those two guys left and the branch just failed to function from there on in. That's the position we're in at the moment. We've got a guy, John Gardiner, who, with no branch structure, has been a really good contact and source of information and guidance; Willie Reid in particular has been in touch with him throughout and he's kept things ticking over in Kilmarnock on our behalf. So, what we're looking to do with Kilmarnock coming back into the public sector in March is reinvigorate that branch, go there and help them to set up a committee and put in place the structures they'll need for when they become part of the public sector in March.

We have written to Serco several times, actually we've quite a healthy membership in Kilmarnock, it's grown considerably this year. Some of that's in anticipation of the fact that come March the SPS have now publicly indicated that the recognition rights for the staff in Kilmarnock will move to those trade unions recognised under the TUS umbrella, at the moment it's Community. Community have, I don't know if it's coincidence or whether our agenda's appeared in some other forum, but this morning the General Secretary from the POA has received a letter from the General Secretary of Community threatening to raise a dispute under the STUC for our involvement and for their failure to continue in the recognised trade

union position come March. What they're looking for, quite unbelievably if you know the history between us and Community, is our support to give them the continued recognition rights. Now, that will be dealt with either at the STUC or through lawyers. That issue will take care of itself. But, where it leaves us is myself and William Reid are involved in the Kilmarnock project board, which has been setup by the SPS probably for the last year, in preparation for the transfer into the public sector. We're not decision makers because we've got no recognition rights, we've got no authority; we are involved in every meeting, we're consulted on on the issues that are on the agenda for discussion. That is in relation to the things that come post-March '24, not the stuff that's going on now. Under the transfer TUPE will apply to the staff in Kilmarnock coming across to the public sector community; under TUPE legislation are entitled to be consulted on in all of that. And that's what's taking place between them and Serco. The SPS are getting on with the job of preparing for that prison coming back into the public sector and becoming part of the SPS.

We are actively involved in discussions, not decision making, and I'm saying that as a public formal statement given what's going on in the background at the moment. But we have to be fair to the SPS that there's a recruitment process going on right now for staff to go into Kilmarnock post-march. The reason for that is the SPS, having gone in themselves and had a look at what's there, they absolutely recognise that the POA will be at the table come March looking to start to have an influence on what we find and what we will look to change in the establishment when we get there. But the SPS themselves have recognised that actually some of the staffing issues that have been identified for themselves can't wait and need to be fixed now, so we're recruiting staff to go into Kilmarnock to deal with some of the long days and the meal-breaks that don't exist in some of the areas in that prison at the moment. There will be many more other things like that I'm sure that will be picked up on by ourselves once we've got full access and the recognition rights to go in and start to tackle some of that, but the SPS are recruiting at the moment. What that will mean is that some staff will be in Kilmarnock in March on SPS terms and conditions, the others will be transferring across on TUPE. That might cause a problem, but I'm happy to stand here and publicly acknowledge that the SPS recognise the complication and difficulty that might cause, have decided that the priority is to fix

the bits that they see broken and need immediate resolve. So, they're up, involved and dealing with that at the moment.

From our point of view we've asked for access to the membership in Kilmarnock several times, Serco have refused to give us access to our own members. If this motion's passed the plan is that we're going to go down to Kilmarnock, there's a hotel right across from the prison that we're going to book a room in, invite our own membership into that and invite those who are considering becoming members of the POA and look to recruit them there. And from that look to build a branch, a committee structure and a plan then to develop further recruitment once we get in there from March onwards. On that basis, we'd ask you to support the motion, thanks.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Low Moss, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 62 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion reads that: The SNC provide an update for Conference on the work currently being undertaken to return HMP Kilmarnock to the public sector.

Phil was quite clear in this update there, and I don't know if you've actually much more to add to that update 'cause it was quite comprehensive there. But I wish to acknowledge the fact that the Scottish government have at least kept to their word and clawed Kilmarnock back into the public sector, which only leaves Addiewell out there in the private sector, hopefully to return very soon. Is there any further update? [Inaudible reply] That's fine.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Edinburgh. Conference, the next motion, 63, is gonna be in camera so if we could have just the delegates and honorary life members, remembered that this year, can stay behind. If everyone else could leave the room for us and the stewards, if you could assist please, thank you.

Motion 63 – Low Moss.

PAUL HAGAN – LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 63: That Conference debates the pros and cons of an introduction of a severance package for the staff volunteering to leave the SPS.

Colleagues, we all know the current issues with the Capability Scheme and how many of our members, over decades of service, are having to jump through hoops in the hope that they're awarded their compensation package. It appears that we're never getting back to the way things were, but as an alternative they could be introduced instead. Please join the debate.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Anybody wishing to join the debate? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'm going to thank Low Moss for bringing this because I've had members of staff who've got years of service, all the rest of it and part of that process is they're no longer fit to do the job, they're no longer fit to go through that process, apply for ill health, you might not get it and then even if you do get it usually it comes through as a lower tier which means you're actually getting penalised anyway even though we're putting you on ill health retirement or they have to go through the Capability Process, which can be long, drawn out and, as it currently stands right now, they'll offer you a job. They'll offer you another job and then we'll see how it goes, and then we'll process it, by which point if the member of staff hasn't been allowed to come back into their work, they've chewed through their sick, they've went onto this, they're having to do all sorts. I've even, as a branch chair, had to write away to the POA down south and ask for them to dip into their pocket to help a member of staff out who was going through that process. And yet, if we had an exit package that was in place that says, 'You meet the criteria, you've done X, you've done Y, here's where it is, here's the remunerations.' That member of staff can make that decision to say, 'Actually, I like that, that's fair. I'm fine with that, let me go.'

Now, we'd all expect there's gonna be a mass exodus under that process. We did it before, before I joined I believe, where they basically said to everybody, 'X amount of service will put you here, leave.' They had that mass exodus. I don't think they controlled it very well back then probably. What we need to do is get to a state where we don't go through the Ill Health, we don't go through

Capability but we actually recognise the dignity that we should be giving anyone, 'You can choose if you no longer want to be in the service.' 'Let me go.' Now, what our governor will say to you, 'Well, you can just resign.' Why should I walk away from 35 years' worth of service without the Prison Service saying, 'Well, actually, thanks very much. Here you go. Go find yourself something else to do'? Please join the debate.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Shotts.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, Conference. The pros and cons of this, that's what we're being asked to debate. So, we pride ourselves on the fact that we don't have redundancies, we always negotiate away from redundancies, so that's a good point for us as a trade union. However, we all know that there's quite a few staff who are using the Capability Process because they're burnt out, can't do their job anymore but they can't afford to actually leave the job until the next two, three, four years, whatever the case may be. So, we've got a lot of staff sitting in that bracket.

What we've got now is, as a con to this, is if there was a severance package you'd probably have 95% of the staff at this floor just now no longer being here, 'cause I think quite a lot of people would take it. And what we're finding here now is that previously we used to have mentors with a prison officer that had been in the job for a number of years would pass on that willingness to help out new recruits that were coming in etc. What we're finding now is that the old dinosaurs, if you want to call us that now, have given up. Things have changed, things have moved on from when I joined the job and what you're getting is you're getting a lot of people coming in thinking they know better. They've never witnessed the riots, they've never witnessed really angry prisoners up until that severe assault that happened at HMP Shotts. And there will be people there that are struggling and that do want to leave but they can't afford to leave.

Is it worthwhile looking at something like that or do we still stick to the part that, as a union, we do not condone redundancies and we do not look at this as a union? I don't know the answer to that. All I know is that if we were to go to Shotts now, I think we would lose quite a lot of staff if there was a severance package.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Greenock.

DON MCGRORY – GREENOCK: Some of you will remember a nice wee man called Tony Cameron. Remember him? He was the one that says, ‘Why am I paying staff to leave? You want to go, go.’ In some ways he was right, some ways he was wrong. But I want to reiterate what Shotts was saying regarding compulsory redundancies. You’ve got to watch we don’t start down that kind of assurance we’ve got regarding no compulsory redundancies. The bottom line is we’re not gonna get severance packages, we can’t get staff as it is, so why are they gonna pay staff to leave when they can’t get staff through the door in the first place. That’s the reality. I get why people want the debate but it’s a pointless debate ‘cause it’s never happening because they can’t get people through the doors so they’re not gonna pay people to go out the other end.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Barlinnie.

MICK MULLHOLLAND – BRANCH CHAIR, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. I think we’ve got to be careful how we’re framing this here, ‘cause a severance package shouldn’t been seen as a replacement for the Capability Process. The Capability Process is in place because people are not fit to do their work, it’s not a severance package replacement. We need to be very careful how we’re discussing this, I think.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Anybody else wishing to join the debate? Jim McCabe on behalf of the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference. I thank Low Moss and all the speakers, because the idea of the debate is say it does come, say mystically there’s some sort of offers there, we need to get the feeling of the floor of where we would go with this.

The civil service actually allows for severance packages; it’s there in the policy. I get they don’t always have the staff to replace it, I get that and I get that from the late eighties to the early nineties we had massive, massive recruitment. That’s 33 years ago. People are getting old, they’re getting worn and these men and women are having to go through a Capability Process or an ill health retirement process because they financially can’t afford just to stop work. They’re worn for all the years of walking up and down stairs and for all the things that we know that happens in prisons. The

Capability Process was an opt out for staff, older staff who were approaching 60-years-of-age, who, for some reason, when they’re 67/68, when the hell are members gonna get to retire. When that came in there was massive unrest about it but it went away, and it only went away in people’s subconscious till they approached 57/58 and are thinking chopping it in three years, and actually, well, you weren’t, it was ten years. We had a massive spike when I was in Barlinnie for people getting to that who were, ‘I just can’t do this for ten years.’ So, we did use the Capability Process to get people money until they reached their sixtieth birthday till they could then draw the classic scheme.

The Capability Process has changed through the direction of the finance director that came into the Scottish Prison Service earlier this year, who decided that, when he was asked by Scottish government why we are paying so much, instead of coming to the trade unions and saying to the trade unions, ‘Why are you so high with regards to paying off Capability than other organisations in the Scottish government?’ Anybody with half a brain would’ve says, ‘I’m gonna go and ask the unions that.’ But he didn’t. And we would’ve told him: 30 years we’ve been subjected to violence or threats; and in the days when we worked in smoke-filled halls when the rest of Scotland had smoke-free working environments; walking up and down some of the older gaols isn’t very easy; the new type of prisoner that’s in now; the new types of drugs that’s in now and just being worn down. That’s why. That’s why the Scottish Prison Service has so many people going through this process.

So, I thank Low Moss here, because there is pros and cons, as John’s rightly says. The pros is that staff could be able to get out of the service with money that would allow them to survive until they were able to draw the classic scheme at 60, without putting them through the humiliation of being forced to go sick, being forced to go to Optima, being forced to go to a specialist. A bit of respect for the Scottish Prison Service is what we required.

The further added stress now that’s happening in some establishments, which is absolutely appalling, where governors are saying, ‘I’m not paying you off. I’ll keep you for a year although you’re not fit to work.’ And this person’s running out of wages and running out of money. It’s absolutely disgusting behaviour! However, I can’t remember who it was that pointed out, there is cons. The cons of this is we would lost, I believe,

massive experienced staff group saying, 'I'm off.' In an environment where we need that group of staff, because we don't have, as Shotts rightly pointed out, we don't have a, 'I'll teach you, you teach them, you'll teach them.' It's not there and it wouldn't be there. Less experience is a potential for unrest and violence in prisons. So, there is pros and cons, but I think, as one of the adverts say, 'It's good to talk', because we need to get a feeling for what's out there.

Just one more thing I'll touch one. We were involved when the Scottish Prison Service drew up the latest Efficiency Compensation Policy document that was never given to the trade unions, until we had to force them to a meeting to say, 'We have not recognised that and you're printing this out and you've got a draft document here that you're actually introducing parts of this.' So, we've been back and forward with a kind of, 'We haven't agreed this, you haven't agreed that but you are now introducing that.' So, at the time, we had two people paid off in Polmont with Capability and they were then saying, 'Well, we can't really pay you off now because we never ticked all the boxes for ill health retirement.' That was part of that new document, draft document that wasn't agreed with the trade unions. So, they were introducing parts of this. They also started to introduce questions to the occupational health therapists whereby, 'Do you think this person meets the ill health retirement Process?' And as discussed yesterday, it's nothing to do with you, you're a health advisor, you're not a pension scheme advisor. But they introduced that, another part of this Efficiency Compensation draft document they done.

However, myself and John were at a meeting with them a couple of months ago and they had reduced it to eight bullet points and we just picked up on the last one. The last one might be where this may come from, and when we actually said it to him, he nearly fainted, but if you read it the way it's written it says, 'We're looking for an alternative method to Capability and ill health retirement.' And we said to him, 'Is that enhanced severance packages, the way before, I think it was SSR '95 when we started Cs and Ds, the way that it was put forward to the senior staff then?' He almost flipped over. But we've put the question out there, 'Is there an enhanced severance package for staff?'

So, I'm gonna finish here and I'm gonna thank Low Moss, because I think debate's good for the soul. Thanks very much.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim and thanks all that took part in the debate. Stewards, if we can bring everybody else back in, thank you.

OK, Conference, for those coming back into the hall, appreciate your support there in leaving and welcome back in and we'll move on with the agenda.

Motion 64 – Barlinnie.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. Motion 64 reads: Conference ask that the SNC approach the employer to support the unions concerns on the failings of GEOAmeY Escorting Services. If both parties agree, they register the concerns with Scottish Government, highlighting the impact GEOAmeY's failures has on the safe running of prisons.

I think we've got a touch of this in every gaol. I know, John, you spoke a bit about it in your opening speech so I don't know where you are, the SNC are, 'cause obviously you might be dealing with this with the SPS, I don't know. Everybody here knows that we're getting let down constantly and we're *always* getting pulled, as PLRs in Barlinnie, with night shift, patrol shifts who are three men down, two men down, getting down to the royal infirmary 'cause GEOAmeY just don't turn up. We are restricting regimes; we're dancing about trying to get people to do overtime. It's a major problem and I know it's not just Barlinnie's problem, I know it's everybody's problem. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference, fully supporting this motion. This has been a bugbear of mine for ten year, maybe even longer. It's constant, it's absolutely constant. Fortunately, I have a person close to me who is part of an inspectorate team and recently they were talking to the Law Lords and the Law Lords had raised concerns about GEOAmeY and they'd raised major concerns about courts and getting people to the courts. They have major concerns that it's about to break down and the person that was in there informed me of this saying that it's looking imminent that they're gonna be breaking down and we're not gonna be able to supply. So, this is not just about the prisons,

this is about the whole escorting, police, prison officers, Law Lords etc. so everybody's aware exactly what this is doing. As Barlinnie just pointed out, it's constant: shortages on the night shift; no restrictions; shortages on every other shift pattern; no restrictions, because what they're doing, as you all know, staff will make it work. It doesn't matter how many short we are they will make it work. And trying to get my members to actually close a grill gate on a landing – don't want it 'cause all it does is antagonise your prisoners and they don't want the conflict so they will just continue to run it. And what we're doing is we're giving free gratis to the Scottish Prison Service to take staff off a post and go and fulfil a duty, a duty that they knew we would be doing when they agreed to actually handover the contract to Reliance. 'cause within that contract it actually says that, 'The SPS will be willing to pick up any shortfalls due to a failing.' Where was the succession planning from the SPS, who knew full well, well in advance when they done the agreement, that this is what we were gonna do? We've got nothing in place, not a thing and it has to stop. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anyone else wishing to speak? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'm going to thank Barlinnie for bringing this up, and I think, as Austin said, we're all touched by it in various ways, shapes or forms and it all comes down to we are having to pick up the pieces for a private sector body that's been entrusted with escorting the prisoners to and from prisons, court proceedings, all the rest of it and including hospital escorts etc. and because of issues, problem staffing, recruiting, payment, wages, if they can't do it the buck stops with the Prison Service. Well, if the buck stops with the Prison Service why have we not got a variable built in that allows us to actually cover that shortfall and utilise that going forward? I have had, and we've just had a discussion, motion 60, the debate about, 'Do we represent first line managers?' I've went into a meeting with my senior management team backing our first line managers who's having to run around trying to cover this escort, that escort, a funeral that GEOAmeY said they would never cancel has now been cancelled. Right, 'We don't have the staff, where do they come from?' This is shocking. This is money that the public has paid to a private company to serve a function and now a public body's having to pick up the pieces which means we're paying for it twice over. This

shouldn't be allowed to happen; the government should be saying to GEOAmeY, 'What are you doing?' And I don't understand it. Do you know it took me nearly seven months to get GEOAmeY's contract, and when I went through it I went through it with a fine tooth comb and highlighted multiple things. I think Mark got the brunt of it at one point, and I turned and says to him, 'Everything's written up for GEOAmeY. Where's the fall back that says the Prison Service can come at them and say this?' I asked locally, 'Can we go and get GEOAmeY to take their hand in their pocket, give us the money back to pay for that?' 'No, we can't do that.' And yet GEOAmeY hand it to the government, should be coming back to us for us to do it. Support the motion please.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, this motion asks that we approach the SPS, Scottish government and jointly register our complaints with Scottish government. We can confirm that we have met with our employer and representatives from Scottish government on numerous occasions and this has resulted in the SPS entering discussions with GEOAmeY, obviously with the full knowledge of the government, to amend the current contract. We will obviously inform you of any outcomes of these discussions. Our Chair has also raised the many concerns with the media and kept our membership updated through various forums, including our membership's monthly update and branch visits. The Justice Minister has spoken to the media regarding the government's concerns with the standard of delivery they are providing, not only the SPS, but the wider justice system as well, their failings. Colleagues, we can promise this Conference that we'll not stop raising numerous failings of the service provided or should that be, not provided, by our escort GEOAmeY. Furthermore, we ask that you and your members commit to do the same locally and with MSPs. We thank Barlinnie for bringing this motion to Conference and we ask you to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Barlinnie, right to reply.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Just a quick one. I take it, John, it's the Justice Secretary that's coming to speak here this afternoon and she'll probably get some questions. I don't know if she's allowing questions?

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: There's no questions for the floor, no.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Or for yourselves?

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: She'll just address Conference and then usually what happens is I will then retort with a couple of points.

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: That's what I mean. So, a good point there, Willie's saying the right thing, go to your MPs and all that. Is this not a good stage to maybe say to her about it? 'What's your thoughts on the fact that they're hopeless?'

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Do I need my notepad of stuff I'm gonna ask her?

AUSTIN O'CONNOR – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Yeah, just in case you forgot.

<Laughter>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 65 – Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. This one might go down as well as motion 37. The motion reads: SNC pursue an equal pay claim for all staff in relation to the geographical Recruitment and Retention Allowance currently being paid to estate staff in HMP Edinburgh.

The background to this, and it came from the floor, currently in Edinburgh our estates and maintenance staff are struggling to employ plumbers, joiners, whatever else. Due to the high wages paid in Edinburgh people can get a similar job outside on a higher wage, so in an effort to attract people into the SPS working in estates and maintenance they

now get a £3,000 RRA. The individual that brought this motion from the floor at Edinburgh thinks that this could be an opportunity for the SNC to pursue an equal pay claim for all staff, and it wouldn't necessarily just be Edinburgh, but all staff. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Edinburgh. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion falls.

Motion 66 – Barlinnie.

MICK MULLHOLLAND – BRANCH CHAIR, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. Motion 66 reads: That the SNC update Conference on any developments regarding the introduction of body cameras into establishments.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Barlinnie. John Devine for the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference. Updating Conference on body-worn cameras. Since last Conference we had a further meeting with the employer regarding the potential introduction of body-worn cameras and we reiterated at that time the need for the employer to ensure compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations. Our employer at the time gave assurances that they would meet their obligations under the current regulations and they further stated that they would carry out a feasibility study before they introduced any pilot.

So, their intention was to run a pilot and they were going to purchase 75 units, 75 cameras and they were going to split the 75 cameras amongst three establishments, that would be 25 cameras in each establishment. This pilot, to our knowledge, has not started, as yet, because they've still to carry out the feasibility study. At this moment in time there has been no further update from the employer regarding the feasibility study. What I can update Conference on, on the topic of body-worn cameras elsewhere, which is something to bear in mind. We are all aware that Kilmarnock has come back into the public sector and they use body-worn cameras. A recent question was raised at parliamentary questions and the question went along the lines of, 'To ask the Scottish government whether any prison officer at HMP Kilmarnock, who are equipped with body-worn cameras, will retain these following the planned nationalisation of the

prison in March 2024.’ So, the response that the SPS gave to that question is as follows: ‘Serco, who currently operates Kilmarnock, are not contractually obliged to install body-worn video cameras. There are currently no plans to retain body-worn cameras currently in use by officers at HMP Kilmarnock post transfer in March 2024. The feasibility of a pilot to test the introduction of body-worn video cameras across the SPS estate is, however, being considered in partnership with trade union partners.’

This echoes our understanding of where we are. The employer has, again, indicated with this report back to the parliamentary question, is that they intend to carry out a feasibility study and they’re running a pilot at some point in the future. We have continued to repeat, at every opportunity, to the employer that the introduction of such equipment should be made under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations, PUWER for short. These regulations form part of what is commonly referred to as the six-pack of Health and Safety Regulations. So, in short, and based on the current information, I’ll reiterate the feasibility of a pilot scheme is being considered by the employer and that concludes the SNC update.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that, John.

Motion 67 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, delegates. Motion 67 reads: That this branch mandate the SNC to engage with the SPS in order that body scanners are issued to every establishment.

Conference, shouldn’t be even having to introduce this motion. We’ve record high levels of drug use within our prisons and yet we’re supplied very little in the way of technology to stem the flow. SPS are proudly pushing the recovery agenda once more, with the reintroduction of recovery cafés and the like. Don’t get me wrong, it’s all very noble, but right now a recovery café in a Scottish prison is as ridiculous as having an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in your local boozier. As long as prisons continue to be flooded with drugs none of these initiatives will ever truly work. How does anyone expect a prisoner to suddenly embrace recovery at the very moment you’re surrounded by more drugs than they’ve ever seen in their entire life? If Scottish government and SPS are serious about the drug problem, in our society and prisons,

demonstrate it by giving every establishment body scanners and more. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Have we got a seconder for the motion? Perth, you wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion. And just to clarify that SNC have already relayed to the SPS that this is our position. There is obviously many benefits to having body scanners, obviously increased security and one of the big subjects is trauma-informed and searching transgender prisoners, and a body scanner would go some way to addressing these issues. I’ve actually seen the body cameras in operation in HMP Stirling when we were invited to visit and I was suitably impressed, they worked well and they seemed to detect stuff.

The only obstacle that we seem to have is the cost to the SPS, but at what cost is our safety and prisoner safety for that matter? We thank Low Moss for bringing the motion to Conference, and if carried we will continue to engage with the SPS to achieve this.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Low Moss, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? The motion’s carried.

Conference, just going to take a pause from the agenda and I’m going to invite our General Secretary, Steve Gillan, up to address Conference.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY POA UK: Thank you very much, Chair. SNC, honorary life members, delegates. It’s always good to be back in Scotland to address you. I’ll try not to repeat anything that our National Chair, Mark Fairhurst, has said. I’m going to start off actually about our honorary life members, listening intently at the back, and it’s not my normal format to speak about one individual, but I actually think one individual does need to be mentioned and that is no other than Tam Adams, quite frankly. If you’d looked at the *Gatelodge* spring edition this year, Phil Fairlie had written a potted history of Tam coming up celebrating his ninetieth birthday on the 2nd of January this year. And what a history the man has had, representing his country at all levels. And when I’ve been coming since the merger in, I think

it was the year 2000/2001, Tam has been an inspiration; he's a friendly man, along with his lovely wife, Ethel, who we always have a good chat with. I think since he retired in 1988, I don't think he's actually missed a Scottish Conference. I think that shows the calibre of the individual that we're talking about, and of course he's heading for 91 in a couple of months. So, Tam, congratulations and I'm absolutely delighted that you appeared in *Gatelodge* and I read your history with interest. Very, very well done and you deserve every accolade that was given in that *Gatelodge*.

<Applause>

Phil mentioned, in motion 61, about Kilmarnock coming into the public sector and of course we welcome that. As a trade union our policy has always been that we want all prisons to be in the public sector but we know governments of all colours have actually gone down the privatisation agenda, and of course, as Mark Fairhurst says, where we have recognition rights we have actually got good industrial relations because our job is to represent people at all levels, irrespective of employers. But we do welcome Kilmarnock coming back in. Where I do get frustrated, and I think Phil touched on it, is the politics around it with other trade unions. I won't dwell on the fact because Phil did mention that there were potentially legal issues and internal disputes within the STUC. I had a conversation earlier with the General Secretary of that trade union after receiving a letter this morning, and let me tell you, the conversation was a little bit acrimonious, shall I say. It was a robust discussion; I don't like being threatened by anybody and I told him that. But there is, I think in the trade union movement, which I can never get my head round, and because I sit on the general council, I sit on the TUC Executive as well and there are lots of inter-union disputes that needn't take place. When you consider, in Great Britain as a whole, there's just about five million trade union members, there must be 20 million individuals out there in workplaces that are unorganised, and yet we all want to fish in the same pond.

Now, I've sat on union disputes panels and I find it disheartening actually, when you've got unions arguing amongst themselves and putting a statement of cases forward, about why those individuals are poaching members from them and tit-for-tat and so forth. I voice my opinion around those general council tables and TUC Executive, so far it's fallen on deaf ears but I think we need to

continue that debate. But I say to community of the union now, and I say to their General Secretary, do not pick a fight with the POA because they'll only be one winner and it will be the POA. It's as simple as that.

Leaving that there, I listened intently as well to what John Devine said in response to the Dumfries motion, motion 60. John spoke eloquently and I think he got it absolutely right in his responses about first line managers. At the end of the day there's no rank in the POA, everybody who pays their subscriptions is a POA member and we represent everybody. That's the reality of things. I remember when I took over as General Secretary in the year 2010, I was criticised by some, particularly on social media, which I don't pay much attention to actually. I'm not on Facebook and I'm not on many groups and I think there's those in this union that are disaffected, they'll probably remain disaffected and they'll have pot shots at local officials, national officials and so forth. I think we've got to rise above it, stay focussed on the real issues and it's about what our members are in the here and now. But I do remember being criticised for politicising the union too much, and some people said to me, 'We're politically neutral.' Well, good news for them, and I told them that at the time, and I make no apology, 'Of course we're not politically neutral. You can't be politically neutral as a trade unionist because politics affect you, your members and your families. What you can be is party-neutral, but you can't be politically neutral.' And that's why I'm delighted that the Scottish National Committee engaged with Unity Consulting, because Neil Findlay, Tommy and Michael have done tremendous work throughout the trade union movement in Scotland on *Scottish* issues. That's why I recommended that they had a dialogue with Unity Consulting, in particular Neil who heads it up, because they've been doing it for the fire brigades union, they've been doing it for ASLEF, the RNT in Scotland and it's solely about Scottish issues.

I think that's vitally important because I remember when the merger took place between Scotland and the POA down south. I don't want to speak ill of ex-NEC and different things, but I got a little bit despondent at times when people thought that the National Executive Committee could oversee everything in Scotland as well. I vowed, when I became General Secretary, and I still vow today, why would I want to interfere in Scottish matters when we've got a Scottish National Committee that are quite capable of dealing, along with you, setting

your own policy, setting your agendas. 'cause it's two separate services, a bit like Northern Ireland as well. I believe in having the autonomy under our rules for both Northern Ireland and Scotland. They're not areas of the POA, they're countries in their own right and we should respect that, and as long as I'm General Secretary, you will have that autonomy in Scotland. And of course there will be issues that we do have, under the rules, whether it's about legal or whether it's about finances, when yes, we might have an oversight on that but the day-to-day running of Scotland is down to the Scottish Conference, not to the National Executive Committee or not to me either and I will reiterate that I will always engage with the SNC but never, ever dictate on what they do in Scotland or Northern Ireland, and I think that's the way it should be. We can advise, we can keep abreast with each other and do different things.

Finally, I just want to talk about our Welfare Fund. Our Welfare Fund is, for me, one of the jewels in the crown, quite frankly, for POA branches and POA members, funded by the members for the members. At the moment our fund sits at just over 1.3 million. That fund has been built up since 2003 with £1 a month for those that opt-in to be in the Welfare Fund and it's ring-fenced. I'll tell you what, I sit on that Welfare Fund each month, and although the cases are confidential to each individual branch and member, some of the cases that I see are absolutely heart-breaking and it's an absolutely privilege to sit on those committees and assist our members in their time of need. You should be absolutely proud of what we achieve through that Welfare Committee. It's there for everybody, it's there for all branches, doesn't matter whether it's Scottish branches, Northern Irish branches, Welsh branches or English branches. It really is heart-warming to see that we can assist people in their time of need. So, thank you very much, have a successful Conference and it's great to be back speaking to you, thank you.

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Steve. As I say, I know you missed last year, so it's welcome to have you back and thanks for addressing Conference. Also, just for this table, we appreciate the support that you've given with relation to Community, it's a tough stance that we're gonna have to take but your support's very much appreciate, so thank you.

Motion 68 – Grampian.

CHRIS SINCLAIR - GRAMPIAN: Chair, Conference. Motion 68 reads: We believe that funding should be made available by the employer to staff to apply for external personal development courses.

This motion came about due to a member of staff being successful in a trawl for a catering post, however, but due to fiscal restraints they were told that they were gonna be taught in-house and deprived an opportunity to go to night school and acquire some quality qualifications. They actually, in fact, ended up getting trained, I believe, on a training course alongside prisoners. I'm asking you to support this motion as furthering your education, in a way that benefits the organisation directly, should be fully supported by the SPS and funded and training development should be made available. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Grampian. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. I'm gonna second this motion but I'm a bit confused 'cause my understanding is there should be money there and HR's got it. You go to HR and put your case in and you ask it and they've got the budget, they're the budget holders for external courses. They might not be very good at doing it but that's for us to go and challenge them on it, but it should be there. I'll support your motion anyway, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anybody else wish to speak on the motion? Willie Reid for the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we're asking you to support this motion. The fact is that a budget does currently exist, as John alluded to there, the real issue is how that funding is distributed. We believe the funding should be more proportionate to individuals. It appears that on the surface that some individuals higher up the management structure have been provided with funding to gain entry to courses that require large proportions of this fund. Any funding should be available to all. This is unfair that some have had access that depletes this fund. Our members personal development should be encouraged, irrespective of their position in SPS and we ask you to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Grampian, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 69 – SPSC & HQ.

PAUL DUFFIN – BRANCH CHAIR, SPSC & HQ: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 69 reads: This Conference mandates the SNC to set up training events with the SPS and to jointly receive the MyCSP employer training in relation to exit schemes ill health retirement applications and medical efficiency. This training would be available to all POAS branch reps.

Conference, as we know the SPS are looking at the inefficiency and compensation of our members when they're unable to continue in their roles due to their medical condition. There is now a greater emphasis for our members to apply for ill health retirement as part of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. MyCSP currently provides employers training on Civil Service Pension Schemes, Civil Service Injury Benefit Scheme and Civil Service Compensation Scheme. This type of training will allow POA representatives to understand how to advise our members in the best way to approach and apply for ill health retirement. As previously stated in an earlier Conference motion there are concerns regarding medical advice and the interpretation of this by HML, and this training would allow reps to anticipate this bureaucracy. The training will also include the Capability dismissals as part of the Compensation Scheme process, this will also be beneficial for the reps and members and this will provide clear guidance and prevent the Spanish practices being adopted at some establishments. There is a cost to this training and we fully expect the SPS to pay for this training. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Paul. Shotts to second.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference, supporting this motion. I brought a motion last year to Conference, reference a resettlement course, which was indoctrinating all this inside it which was about retirement, about your pensions, about MyCSP being done at the college so we actually had a resource that we could go to, and I fully support what you want to do here 'cause I think we should tie all this in. There should be something in place for staff right away.

Something that we had in the military, when we were finished with our military, they had the Resettlement Course; everything that we required to go to civvy street was put in place for us at that point in time. The SPS is very remiss in not having something in place for the older members of staff or even younger members of staff or having to go out on Capability or whatever the case may be, but there's nothing at all apart from us trying to go through a minefield and find it ourselves. Sometimes I've had members coming to me and saying, 'I was on the phone for four-and-a-half hours only for the phone to go down on me from MyCSP', for example. Then they've gotta go through that whole rigmarole again to get non-answers at the end of it. This is important for our members, it's important for staff who are retiring or gone through from medical retirement etc. so we should have this in place. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Greenock.

DON MCGRORY - GREENOCK: Asking you to reject the motion. I get the sentiments behind it, but see the motion was just for MyCSP to do the training and to look after the staff. It's when you started mentioning about us being involved in it. I don't know about you guys, I'm a pipe fitter, I dug holes in the street. I don't want to get involved in actually advising my members regarding pensions and ill health retirement. To a certain extent, yeah, I get what you're saying but I think fully support MyCSP doing that sort of training and advising members 'cause that's what needs to happen, but I don't want me to be involved because I've not got that level of skill and I don't want members then coming back and saying, 'You said this' or 'you said that' and the next thing the whole union's getting involved. So, please reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Inverness.

ROBERT LEES – BRANCH CHAIR, INVERNESS: Delegates, I'd just like to reiterate Don's comments on that. What concerns me is the actual level of training that we're gonna get, will we be professionally qualified? It's too much of a grey area for me at the moment until I have more information, so please reject the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'm gonna say I'm hoping that the SNC member that's gonna come up is gonna ask for a remit, because there's part of it I agree with and there's parts that I don't. What I do agree with is what John said, which is there should be a place where the college is prime – if you're due to retire, you're due to go out on a set date, you go there X-amount of weeks, months before it happens, you get a road show if you want, 'Here's what you need, here's what you need to do', wee side lines, 'go talk to this person, go get that setup.' Gives you a face to talk to, you feel as if you're not sitting on the phone for four hours doing it. But I also take on board what Don said, 'We as the union.' I feel most of the time I'm doing HR's job, I'm doing the Prison Service's job. They're the employer. We're the union. We shouldn't be doing their job for them. This is down to the employer, so that last part that says, 'We do this', yeah, give me the training, let me have that ability to sit and go, 'Right, OK, this is what you need to do.' Even if it's a conduit towards where it's gonna be held, it could be a road show that goes round each prison or various places, you can have the branches, the conduit that says, 'Right, we're setting this up, any members wanting to go to it, do that.' That wee part of our help for the members, it doesn't take away from what the Prison Service has got to do and the employer has to do. So, I'm hoping to ask for a remit and then this goes through.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Any other speakers? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion, not a remit. However, I will try to explain. OK, so, 'The Conference mandates the SNC to approach the SPS with a view to setting up MyCSP training events.' I'm well aware that MyCSP have various online training podcasts and seminars which are freely available to all scheme members, and that's where you decide, your choice on what to do with your pension. Don, I took very much what you said that we are not here to advise people and it's a bad route to go down if we try and think we can give people financial advice. But, it asks quite clearly that we ask for MyCSP to give us the training, and the training should be available to all POA, not just branch reps; everybody should be informed how they can access their pension.

It's a matter that's quite close to my heart having dealt with many issues through Capability and ill

health retirements and suchlike. I wasn't aware, and thanks Paul for bringing it, that they did particular employer training, that MyCSP did that. I didn't know and I don't know specifics, so I look forward to working with Paul and speaking to Paul about how that training works, how we can best produce it to our members, all members, including us as reps 'cause we should all be informed. And if there is specific training that MyCSP will give us all, then good, and Paul, I look forward to working with you to try and make that right. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. SPSC & HQ, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 70 – Edinburgh.

GRANT FORRESTER – BRANCH CHAIR, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. It's just an update on Conference of the progress being made in negotiating the return to an Operational Lead.

We feel this time last year we pushed for Operational Lead, but actually it's been very, very quiet, so we're looking for an update on it. I know John spoke about it in the start of his speech, but we feel that we should be pushing more for it for our members. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. As it's an update there's no seconder required, so Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks, Chair, on behalf of the SNC. I think if I just probably describe where we are right now at present. First of all, you'll see from the pay offer that's out there there's still a piece in that pay offer that talks about the SPS still willing to engage with the trade unions to find the solution to a piece that's been sitting there from the Three-Year Deal. I'll just go back to the wording in the motion itself, and in danger of being accused of being accused of being a parent again from Barlinnie, I'm going to pick up the point about Operational Lead. It was never about an Operational Lead or an optional Lead in isolation, it was about a new pay structure. We were looking to get a pay structure that decoupled the operational line from the rest of the organisation and do separate negotiations in and around that to better

reflect and capture the roles and differentials between them. That was what the ambition was, that was the purpose of the piece that was in the Three-Year Deal. At the time when that Three Year Deal was put together it seemed much more doable than it does standing here talking to you today and the reason for that was of our conversations going on at Scottish government level about pay coherence. The reason that's important is because this isn't a POA deal, it's a TUS deal, it belongs to all the trade unions in the Prison Service who've all got a vested interest its outcome. So, the signatures that are required for us to deliver the part that still remains undelivered from the Three Year Pay deal requires that SPS, as well as the POA, PCS and Prospect, all to be able to sign up and agree to what it is that we do to address this issue.

Now, this is not a criticism of PCS or Prospect, they're doing exactly what we would do, they've got the same role in life that we've all got which is to promote and protect the best interests of the membership at all times. What's been put on the table from their point of view, because of the pay coherence conversations at Scottish government level, have dropped off and not making any progress, they are hanging on to what we've got at the moment. Now, in some ways it's a compliment because promote and protect in the best interests of their membership for them means staying tied to the POA in these conversations in and around pay. I'm not criticising them; I would do exactly the same if the shoe was on the other foot and we were in that situation ourselves, you would do what you think you needed to do to protect your membership. But where that leaves us is in a situation where we just need to be upfront and honest with ourselves, at some point when you're hitting your head off a brick wall sometimes you need to stop doing it and I think that's where we've got to with this. We are never going to find a set of language around that agreement from the Three-Year Deal that all parties are going to sign up to.

We'll touch a bit more on that in the motion that follows this one in terms of where we go from here, but I think, apart from the fact the SPS have still got a commitment in the pay offer that's out there, on our insistence that it be there, the SPS have offered up an opportunity to go out to tender for an independent body to come in and help assist and move this forward. I know from talking to other trade unions I am not holding out any hope of that leading to the solution, I don't see us finding that as being the way that we're going to break down the difficulties and the barriers we've got dealing

with it in that way. I think what we need to do then is recognise that that isn't going anywhere, get it to a situation where the POA can progress this on its own behalf away from that Three Year language that was committed to previously and find another way of dealing with it. That's just an honest answer in terms of where we are with this, colleagues.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that, Phil.

Motion 71 -SNC

Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: This motion clearly is to then move onto where we want to see us going from the discussion we've just had, there in the previous one. You've had from Neil Findlay and from Mike yesterday from Unity Consulting. You'll also have heard from them that they represent a group of trade unions, one of which is the FBU. During the process of the Three Year Deal we engaged with the fire brigade union on the basis that we thought, as an operational organisation, they may have a solution that we can either replicate or look to them from to find a pay structure that would allow us to address this issue.

We made contact with the FBU several times, we had two meetings in the diary to meet with them, both times those meetings got cancelled and the reps that were in place at that time are now no longer there are new reps who are in place. Unity Consulting work with the FBU, they've got very good relationships and close contacts with them, and in the meetings that we've already had with Neil and with Tommy and Mike, they're already, subject to Conference, going ahead with this motion, lining up the opportunity for us to sit down with the FBU to look at the pay structure and the way that they manage pay. Because they've got front line operational staff, same as us, but they've also got backroom non-operational staff who are employed by the FBU who manage their pay in a different way. Now, it might not be a perfect fit, it might not be exactly what we're after but it at least gives us an opportunity to look at alternatives and sit down and see if it's a way of exploring it. If it's not that then we're going to continue to work with Unity to see, between them and us, what we can do, either to put pressure or a campaign in place to get this delivered through some other route or to help us engage with the employer and Scottish government about developing alternatives together.

I think, from us, it has to be one that's done on the back of a POA agenda. Trying to do it, I think, in any other way we're always going to run up against others who, legitimately and quite rightly, are looking to protect their own interests. The motion's asking us to get permission to engage with Unity Trust to look for alternative solutions. We'd ask you to support it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Do I have a seconder for the motion? Edinburgh, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? The motion's carried.

Motion 72 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES – BRANCH CHAIR, INVERNESS: Chair, Conference, SNC, fellow delegates, invited people. The motion reads: Conference instructs the SNC to approach the employer to review the sick variables in establishments in order to agree a more realistic variable amount to assist the running of safe, secure and stable regimes within our prisons.

Conference, HMP Inverness has one of the lowest sickness variables in the service; the average sickness rate is regularly in excess of 20% of that variable figure. This is to the detriment of our establishments and the members who work within. This issue affects all our establishments and I think now the time has come for a review of the original sickness variable to take place. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Glenochil, wish to speak?

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'm going to thank Inverness for bringing this one. Again, it highlights the lack of review that should be happening every so often on the sick variables etc. Glenochil's sick has skyrocketed for various reasons, a lot of it due to long term illnesses because staff members are waiting for hip ops, knee ops, hand operations, all the rest of it that got knocked out of touch with COVID and various other things. The sick variable doesn't take that into account in the sense that we've got it limited to three days, four days or whatever it may be. It's not realistic, it's not fit for purpose. And we're not saying there should be an open chest that says,

'Listen, it can be X', but just make it more viable for the prisons to operate so they have the cover. We're actually getting to a point now where I'm having to sit and have a There's not enough cover in all the variables, they just keep cutting it away and cutting it away 'cause they see that as an easy trim of the fat. We take that away, they've not got the variable anymore, not got the sick variable anymore, how do we cover it? Please support the motion, and thanks Inverness for bringing it.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Any other speakers on the motion? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion. I've already covered this a wee bit on motion 50, in which I stated quite clearly that it is our intention to have all variables reviewed in the near future. I'm aware that Inverness have a particular historic problem with their sick variables 'cause it was calculated back in the day when they had variable sick and that was up there at the time. It should be relooked at and it should be recalculated as all variables were; we touched on maternity; we touched on various other variables. I had an opportunity last night, whilst doing a bit of networking, to discuss with our employer how we look at variables and how we should review them, and there is a commitment between the SNC and senior management to review all variables in the near future, which will come about this motion. Please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Inverness, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 73 – Low Moss. Looking for permission to withdraw, all those in favour, please show. All against. Abstentions? OK, motion withdraw.

Motion 74 - SNC

William Reid to move on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Conference, the motion reads: That this Conference mandate the SNC to ensure the SPS allow an individual, if they wish, to attend in person at their assault appeal hearing. This would erase any dubiety of the current interpretation of the rules.

Chair, Conference, moving the motion on behalf of the SNC. This came about because a branch were informed that the individual could not attend. Me, personally, I was amazed to find out that at an assault appeal, the individual who lodges it cannot attend in person, which I think is just shocking! Even the idea that any appeal you cannot turn up in person. Now, I challenged it, at the time I questioned it with a case manager in the H team, the H team, yeah, who informed me that, 'This was always the case, ask any of your colleagues who have attended', which is a bit of contradiction, but still, 'Ask any of your colleagues that attended.' 'Right, no problem.' Anyway, an excellent, well-thought-out explanation in response. That aside, the fact is, and we all know this, we rely on witness statements and it can become very difficult to ascertain the facts, and that was a problem in this particular case. The fact that one of the managers who witnessed this assault didn't think they needed to put in a statement that's for our information. Now, we always tell people, 'When you write something down make sure you put as much information as possible.' His explanation was three or four lines, it wasn't actually factually correct. Luckily, we came to the right decision with the individual, but that shows you the complex and the difficulties when somebody isn't there. You're not cross examining, you're asking for the facts. You go to a grievance appeal, the individuals sitting there if they want and you can ask them 'cause there's always something that you go, 'Oh, can you tell me this, can you tell me that.' Now, to not do this when somebody has been assaulted is ridiculous! It's shocking and it shouldn't be the case, so Conference, please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Shotts to second.

JOHN – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference, supporting this motion. Shotts had fought for two years to get the definition of an assault put in place, and indeed, the outcome at the back of it. But what we're finding recently with assaults, and it's started to go back again, is that members of staff, for example, are running towards an incident and the usual, 'Get back, stand down, don't hurt 'em, move away.' And then you get hands on. At that point that is you actually deployed into a situation with a non-compliant, at that point the prisoner pulls his arm back, you grab him and, as the officer turns round and says, 'I then fell against a metal bed.' Not because they were hugging, kissing and actually shaking hands, but because they were about to assault each other. So,

whether or not you were the intended victim of the assault, it's his actions that caused you to have the injury, therefore, that is an assault. But see, trying to get HR to actually understand and listen to the whole process, again, they go back to the same thing. And the thing we require here, see if the member of staff was actually there at the appeal hearing and explains that, you might get non-operational people who don't actually understand the whole process, the fear factor and the adrenaline rush that's gone through your body at that time when you're trying to stop two fighters. So, this has to be support, colleagues, please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Any other speakers on the motion? OK, all those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Conference, we're going to break now for lunch. If we could have everyone back in the hall for quarter-past-two ready to go. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Afternoon, Conference, welcome back. Always an enjoyable lunch. Just before we go back onto the agenda, I'm gonna ask Jim Dawson to approach for the honorary life members, thank you.

JIM DAWSON – HONORARY LIFE MEMBER: Conference and honoured guests. It's a pleasure to be asked to come up here and present fraternal greetings on behalf of the honorary life members. Although, I have to say, I was only third choice; Derek can't seem to walk this far and Davey wants your disability policy because the podium's too big for him to step up. That aside, this is my 30th Scottish Conference in a row, and it's always good to come back and see all the old faces, and this year it's heartening to see a lot of new faces coming in as delegates because that's the future of yous going forward and doing your business.

It was also heartening to listen to Mark Fairhurst saying that your membership is at an all-time high, when you couple that with Kilmarnock coming back into the sector it should always have been in, it's an excellent way of going forward for the POAS. I know you've got plenty of motions still to do so I'm going to keep it fairly brief. I want to comment you. I think you really need to give yourself an absolute pat on the back for last night's fundraising efforts – over £4,000 is a tremendous amount. I know it's sad that we have to help out

food banks. That is the political time we're living in I'm afraid to say and I'm sure your fundraising will be very much appreciated.

Can I just finish off by thanking, Kathryn and Peggy for making it such an enjoyable time and, honest to God, the way they look after the HLMs, it's great! Our thoughts are with the HLMs that can't be with us, Bill Stevens and John Renton, for various reasons and I'm sure you'll join with us in wishing them the best. Thanks, Conference, and I hope we see you again next year.

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that, Jim. Moving on with the agenda

Motion 75 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, delegates. Motion 75 reads: This union seeks to ensure end of course reports to be included on probation reports for all recruits. SPSC currently compile an end of course report separate document that does not routinely get shared with home establishments.

Conference, this one was proposed by an FLM at Low Moss. I don't have a lot of knowledge on the subject myself, but from what I understand, currently new recruits are solely managed from their home establishment. The probation report states that a one-month assessment report needs to be completed, but FLMs are unable to do this as the candidate is at the college for the first six weeks. Meanwhile, the college appears... I think they've been at some sort of loggerheads. The college will not complete the one-month report for the candidate either. So, the motion is to seek to have the SPSC complete the one-month report and send it to the home establishment for inclusion in the probation report. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Do we have a seconder for the motion? Polmont. Any speakers on the motion? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. Malky, we're gonna ask for a remit on this motion, if you don't mind. We're not entirely sure what's behind it; it doesn't surprise me it came from a first line manager actually. But we'd like to chat with you and get

more details about what you're actually after and what you want us to do with this motion. As far as we know when you're at the college you get a report written on you and then that stays at the college then when you're back into the establishment. However, we don't want to speak against something that we don't know entirely what you're after, so can we remit the motion please?

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Low Moss, accept the remit? Conference, accept the remit? Thank you, motion's remit.

Motion 76 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES – BRANCH CHAIR, INVERNESS: Chair, Conference, SNC, motion 76 reads: Conference instructs the SNC to explore the introduction of providing an individual based NHS Assist system. Therefore, a member has the option to subscribe to dental and medical organisations from pre-tax wages similar to the Cycle to Work Scheme. This would reduce the excessive medical waiting lists experienced by members.

Currently there are more people needing treatment than the NHS has the capacity to deliver. To cope with the increased demand caused by the people seeking treatment, this type of assist process can move the injured person to a private health system, which has a significantly waiting list. Also, regarding diagnostic checks the system uses the most appropriate processes, GPs referral for ultrasounds, we generally changed to MRI scans, this apparently offers a significant increase in the detail of diagnosis. Currently, the NHS experiences long waiting lists, people see no point in seeking a crucial diagnosis or much needed treatment because they fear they will never be seen anyway or feel guilty to not burdening the NHS further and patients not being able to get on with their lives and especially the more serious of cases.

On the contrary, the benefits though of this system, if it's agreed, would be an improved health and wellbeing of the workforce, increased employee engagement, low absentee rates and improved employee morale. Please support the motion, colleagues, thank you very much.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Have we got a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion falls. OK, seconded by Perth. Do you wish to

Speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Eddie Cruse on behalf of the SNC.

EDDIE CRUSE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. We don't have a national cycle service but we do have a National Health Service and we pay into that. The NHS Assist is not, it's a private entity and you'll be asking us to engage with that private entity on that basis. We have already the NHS, we pay into that, we should support that and we shouldn't support the private entity, so please reject the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Eddie. Inverness, like to reply? Conference, all those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 77, Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 77 reads: This union seek to ensure from SPS that where a local senior management team, for found to be continually and deliberately acting out with agreed parameters of the Partnership Agreement, then these managers should be held accountable for their actions and be subject to the same scrutiny and disciplinary action as a uniformed member of staff employed by the SPS.

Now, Conference, this one came from the floor at a lock up meeting. I get the sentiment of the motion, however, frustrating as it is, when the same managers continue to ignore even the basic tenets of the Partnership Agreement it doesn't always mean it's a code of conduct issue. Also, raising a PFTA every time a manager goes rogue isn't always the best tactic either. Particularly, it's usually aimed at the decision rather than the individual themselves, so it's not solving the issue.

I'm not quite sure what the solution is but the motion clearly calls for scrutiny and accountability for those managers who continually float the rules of Partnership, and for that reason I would ask you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Greenock.

DON MCGRORY - GREENOCK: Asking you to support the motion. I have to disagree with what

Malky's saying. To me, once you've warned them, then yeah, put in a Failure to Agree every single time. Every single time put a Failure to Agree in once they've been warned, because what'll happen is, yeah, their wings will get clipped. No governor and no management team wants to be embarrassed by us being right and if they're breaching Partnership you will be right and you will win your Failure to Agree, and just put one in every single time and the managers you're talking about, they will get, maybe not officially, but they'll get their wings clipped. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Anybody else wanting to speak? Jim McCabe on behalf of the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC. I'm going to ask you to reject this motion. 'The union seek to ensure the SPS where a local senior management team are found to be continually and deliberately acting out with agreed Partnership.' That's a Failure to Agree. The same managers doing this, if they're held accountable with the same scrutiny as this action against a uniformed member of staff. To my knowledge there's been no uniformed member of staff sanctioned or coded for breaching Partnership. With regards to the rogue managers that Malky's talking about, yeah, they should be dealt with, and Donny's right, put a PFT in every time because it goes to a National Partnership Forum and it's raised how many local Failures to Agree there are. And if the same managers are making decisions that is compromising the health and safety of your members, you put the staff grievances in and you continually put them in until there's a catalogue of evidence to support the local Failures to Agree. But that motion can't be achieved and I'm asking you to reject that motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim. Low Moss, right to reply.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: I just want to actually agree with Jim there. I think certainly if one thing the motion's achieved, even if it doesn't get through, is the fact I think we have a consensus now in how to deal with rogue managers, which we maybe didn't have before. I just wanted to put that on record.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. All those in favour of

the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Motion 78 – Inverness.

ROBERT LEES – BRANCH CHAIR, INVERNESS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 78 reads: Conference instructs the SNC to send the verbatim report from Scottish Conference to all branches within a reasonable timescale after the end of Conference. It should be made available before the call for motions for the next year's Conference.

Colleagues, members, I approached the local branch committee for detailed on the results of motions debated at Conference and asked for a verbatim report. Now, the advantages of the report is that it provides information of everything that was discussed in the meeting to colleagues and members, the content of the report is available fully to reference, everyone has the same record of the meeting and it can serve as a useful source of information on past activities for future management committees. Colleagues, I submit this motion for your support. Thank you very much.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Edinburgh, wish to speak? Anyone wish to speak? Greenock.

DON MCGRORY - GREENOCK: Supporting the motion, sort of supporting the motion. I get the verbatim thing 'cause obviously it means somebody's gonna have to sit and type up forever, but I remember years ago, I dunno about just the one year or whatever, we got a DVD sent out to us. If you guys remember it was a DVD got sent out. I think rather than a verbatim report if we got the DVD sent out then somebody doesn't have to type it up, we could just sit and watch it again. I don't know, maybe there was a data protection or some reason we couldn't do it, but that seemed to work. I don't know if it was just the one year but rather than someone having to type up this whole Conference, then just that DVD, the filmed Conference we can sit and watch it and we just get the same answer anyway. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Greenock. Anybody else wishing to speak? Mark Meikle on behalf of the SNC.

MARK MEIKLE – SNC: Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC in support of the motion. We do have the resources to achieve this, and Don touched on it. Conference is recorded from the back of the room and that can then get transformed digitally and then sent out as a verbatim report. The motion asks for it to be sent to all branches. I assume having it sent in digital format, keeping with environmental issues, and a request for a hard copy, if needed, would be acceptable. The only reason the last two Conferences didn't go out in time is we had a technical hitch with some of the recording getting transferred into a verbatim report. That is now available; Catherine has it if you wish to request it and she's very confident that going forward we'll be able to meet this motion. Please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mark. Inverness, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 79 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 79: That this union seek to substantially decrease the waiting time it takes for applicants to the role of prison officer to be informed that they're successful.

Conference, not always, and I'm informed it's actually reduced now, but it's been reported that applicants have had to wait up to 16 weeks to be informed that they've been successful. Now, that person will have also made applications to other organisations and if they've been successful there will more than likely have been informed in far less time, and will likely already be employed by someone else by the time the SPS get back to them, so they'll be far less inclined to then join ourselves. We losing out on talent by not informing these people in line with other competing organisations and I would ask you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Low Moss. Secunder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we're asking you to reject this motion. We understand at a time when recruitment is causing concerns in the establishment that this

motion may appear to help with the solution to this problem. This, unfortunately, isn't the case. This motion asks the union to do something we have no control over. I obviously sit on the Workforce Plan, so the reasons given at Workforce Planning meetings for the delays are that outside agencies that are required to carry out the various checks, whether it's medical checks, disclosure checks, all of these departments have recruitment issues and as a result timeframes have become stretched. We, the union, cannot speed up the process in these agencies. We can, however, make our frustrations known and we have. A worrying issue is, in fact, recently a couple of individuals have actually had their contract employment terminated because either a full disclosure report had not been carried out or something was missed on the disclosure report. So, now you're asking us to put pressure on that agency, which we can, to make sure they do it quicker, now they're making mistakes just now as it is, so why would you want to put more pressure on it to be quick?

Conference, we fully understand why this has been brought to Conference by Low Moss but we're asking you to reject this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Low Moss, right to reply.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Conference, I take on board pretty much everything that William had to say there and I agree with it, but just the wording in the motion is that, 'This union seek to substantially decrease the waiting time'. William has explained that he can't have any direct influence over that but I think, as a union, all it's asking is to influence the employer. The union, I agree, doesn't have any control over certain aspects of recruitment, but we can influence it and that's what we're here to do. I'm confused as to how we can do that with the employer 'cause I do think this is an issue we should be tackling head on, because what sort of person's gonna wait 16 weeks, sit on their backside and not... what kind of recruit are we getting at the end of that? We're getting the lower level. For me, I'm still pretty much of the opinion that we need to influence the employer as best we can to get the best talent into the organisation. I ask you to support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost.

Conference, motion 80 is an SNC motion. SNC are looking to withdraw this motion; we're content that it's already Conference policy and that the work's actually been getting taken forward in different working groups that we're involved in, so just looking to remove it from the paper today. We're looking for Conference permission to withdraw the motion. Any against? Any abstentions? Motion's withdrawn.

Motion 81 – Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Gluton for punishment. Chair, SNC, delegates. Motion 81 reads: That the membership mandate the SNC to raise awareness with the employer that direct entry C bands have to do SVQs and direct entry D bands do not have to do any form of qualifications once employed by the SPS. Direct entry C bands have to obtain a qualification upon starting the job. As things currently stand direct entry D bands do not. If it is deemed appropriate that a direct entry C band has to obtain a qualification, then surely it stands to reason a direct entry D band must obtain the same qualification minimum. The motion was to raise awareness with the employer so that they may take a decision to do one of the following: 1) To do away with the SVQs for direct entry C bands. 2) Require direct entry D bands to obtain the same qualifications as direct C bands. 3) Require direct entry D bands to obtain a higher qualification to which there should be a timescale for implementation.

Conference, it does seem odd that one uniformed grade are required to complete SVQs and another aren't, particularly when some of the roles are mutually interchangeable. Although, it was clearly a consideration at the time direct entry D bands were being discussed, a few years have passed since then and all the motion really asks for is to raise the subject again with the employer to gain their opinion on whether or not it's something they see any benefit in keeping in place. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, do you wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference, the SNC are speaking for the motion. I would like to point out though, the employer is already aware of

the current arrangements, as it's the employer that puts those arrangements in place. Raising awareness with the employer in itself doesn't serve really to achieve that much, other than an awareness of something that they're currently aware of. We are currently looking at the justification for the current arrangements, rather than just raising the awareness. The aim is to ensure that the employer provides suitable and sufficient training to ensure that the employer can evidence compliance with their current obligations. We have already started to engage with the employer on the issue of recruitment for all employees. This is helping us gain a better understanding of how the employer meets its obligations and enables all employees every opportunity to be competent and confident in carrying out their contractual role. We have been informed the current SVQs undertaken by the ops officers are being phased out by SQA some date in the future. Also, Skills for Justice are working with all main justice sector bodies, including the SPS to design a replacement SVQ model and a modern apprenticeship qualification for all new recruits. Once these have been completed and signed off by SQA they will be available to use, whether the SPS choose to take up on that is obviously another matter, but we would be involved in pursuing that. We will continue to engage with the employer regarding the current arrangements and we will look at their justification for those arrangements and continue to do that.

It is important for us all to have some thoughts and views on any new initiatives that the employer's bringing forward and anything that they're pursuing regarding training. We listened yesterday to the presentation in a trauma informed approach. This does not mean that we just drop everything else and forget all of the other critical training and training package that gives our members confidence when carrying out their duties. Basically, we cannot let our guard down here; we cannot allow the prisoners to manipulate any system or process that we might bring in and we cannot allow prisoners to dominate the ground. We must maintain safe, secure and stable prisons and we do this by ensuring staff are suitably trained. There's an old military saying that I'll share with you, 'Train hard, fight easy.' And that is just about the start of it. We also need our members to have the trust and confidence in our employer, not just in relation to the training that they provide for our members, we also need our employer to be supportive, reasonable and competent. An effective way of demonstrating and evidencing that has been

maintaining consistent and fair application of current policies, practices and processes. That's maybe a bit of wishful thinking there.

Conference, we are supporting the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Malky, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? The motion's carried.

Motion 82 – Low Moss. Conference, Low Moss are looking to withdraw the motion. Conference, give permission? Those against? Any abstentions? Motion's withdrawn.

Conference, we're just about to bring the Cab Sec into the room, so just bear with us a minute or two just as she's coming in.

Conference, delighted to welcome Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, Angela Constance, to address Conference. Her first year of doing it; welcome into the job. I hope you're enjoying the job.

ANGELA CONSTANCE – CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE: Oh, aye.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: And look forward to hear what she has to say. Conference, Cab Secretary, Angela Constance.

ANGELA CONSTANCE – CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE: Thanks very much for that kind introduction. I am really delighted to join you all here in your Annual Conference. It is, as the Chairman said, my first time at a POA Conference so hopefully in the future you will invite me back.

Since taking up my post as Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs I've had the pleasure of visiting almost every establishment across the country and I plan to see them all before the end of the year. I've still to come and visit Castle Huntley, Low Moss and the Liliastown Custody Unit in Glasgow and I look forward to doing that. It's also, on my visits, been an opportunity for me to meet some of your members and I've had the particular pleasure of meeting some of your members when I visited Shotts and Greenock recently.

It was Nelson Mandela who said, 'No one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its gaols.' I think that's very true because prisons often mirror, and indeed, are often the mirror image of

some of society's ills. But prisons are, nonetheless, a unique environment that presents their own challenges. In a previous life I worked as a social worker, it was a long time ago now I have to confess, 16 years since I went to my work at the state hospital, it's 22 years since I went to my work as a social worker in the HMP Perth and it's even longer since I went to my work in Friarton or HMP Glenochil. So, I have worked with offenders and their families, I have been a mental health officer and have worked with people in their time of crisis and have also worked with people that I have subsequently lost. So, while my experience is not in any way contemporaneous, I hope that I can convey to you that I do have a wee bit of insight into the fact that the job that you all do day-in/day-out is not easy.

During my visits I've been really pleased to see that a lot has changed. Polmont now has less than 200 boys; in my time there were several hundred under 21s in Polmont. I've seen massive changes in the vocational and work training opportunities that exist in many of our prisons and I think the number of outside agencies, and in terms of that cross collaborative working and planning for release, I see a big difference in that as well. I can also see that some very important things have not changed or not changed as much or as fast that we all would've hoped for.

The one thing that has endured and that's your commitment, your compassion and the strong relationships that you have been able to form, and you care for people who are, yes, sometimes very dangerous people but you're also caring for people that are often very vulnerable and you're helping them towards a better future. I was really struck by the words of an individual in custody in HMP Greenock quoted in the recent Inspectorate Report that said, 'Staff have been exceptional in helping me through my sentence. All of the staff are wonderful and easy to speak with. This is my first time in prison and I have felt supported at each step of the way.' Friday the 29th of September marked Hidden Heroes Day and that was an opportunity to highlight the essential and challenging work that you do. Prison officers are perhaps not as frequently in the public eye as other professions, such as police officers and nurses, but your contribution is no less important in the care of individuals and protecting the public. And as I said in my video message, I want to say a genuine and heartfelt thank you to all staff working across our prison estate, and I am proud of the work that you and your colleagues do and the work that you

continue to do to keep our communities and our country safe.

The last few years have not been easy to say the least, you were at the very frontline during COVID coming to work day and night while many of us were working from home, and despite the challenges you managed to keep prisons safe, stable and secure. Coming out of COVID we've been faced with rising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis with record level inflation and price rises, which of course is affecting families across the country as well as services. Now, since the start of the year, we've seen a significant rise in the prison population. This is affecting everyone who lives and works in our prisons, and I understand that this is putting increased pressure on space and services and more limited access to purposeful and rehabilitative activities, and I can imagine that you're all having to work very hard to keep potential tensions at bay and I recognise that you are facing exceptional challenges. I just want to convey to you that I, as your Cabinet Secretary for Justice, am taking the issue of the rising prison population very seriously and very seriously indeed. On the 3rd of October I gave a statement to parliament, and that was a proactive statement, I wasn't asked by anybody or demanded by any opposition party to give a statement. But I proactively gave that statement because parliament and the country need to know the scale of the challenge.

That was my first opportunity to set out a number of actions that Scottish government and the Prison Service and their partners are taking to mitigate the impact and to reduce numbers. This includes reviewing our approach, for example, to progression and step down in and around home detention curfew would be one example, as well as how we need to further develop the use of electronic monitoring, as well as community sentences, and in particular looking at the use of GPS technology. We've also established the Prison Population Leadership Group comprising of senior representatives from the justice sector and beyond to identify both the long term and short-term options to address the challenges and to ensure a collective response. I know that many of you might be tempted to say, 'So what, big deal', at a Prison Population Leadership Group. But what I want to emphasize is that the cross government, cross justice sector and beyond approach, because prisons can't and must not be seen as the end of the line and there's a responsibility on all of our partners to be part of the solution, because

managing the rising prison population is not just a prison problem, it affects so many other aspects of our justice system and indeed wider society. And that is why we are setting higher expectations on all parts of the justice system, as well as partners such as health and social work. And as the Chief Inspector of Prisons has rightly challenged us, we must now bring everyone together with a collaborative whole systems focus. And as a country we have made significant reforms in our justice system more broadly, but more specifically in terms of how we divert young people from the Criminal Justice System and some of the work that we've done in around working with women, that we now need to increase our resolve because the journey is far from complete. And bearing in mind that most prisoners will eventually return to the community, what happens in prisons therefore matters, so the work that you do to rehabilitate, to improve skills and form strong relationships prepares those folk in your care for life after prison and it helps to keep communities safe now and in the future. I know that managing the impact of our rising prison population within SPS mean some change, and change at a much faster pace than would be under the normal circumstance. And I know that that can be challenging so I do want to thank you all for your continued support and engagement in this work that seeks to manage our way out of the current situation.

As the prison population is rising, I'm also aware of the increased numbers in custody with links to serious and organised crime groups and challenges around drugs and psychoactive substances. My post before this one was as the Drugs Policy Minister so some of the work that we are now trying to implement in justice settings to help folk in the road to recovery and to prevent overdose was work that I had started as part of our national mission. The Scottish government and partners across the justice sector, including the Prison Service is, I can assure you, fully committed to tackling these gangs and organised crime and reducing the harm that they cause. One of my other roles as Justice Secretary is to chair the Serious Organised Crime Task Group. It is, of course, paramount and a matter of the upmost seriousness, both for the Scottish government and the Scottish Prison Service, that staff safety and security is enhanced and that full support is given to anyone affected. We know that serious and organised crime has a devastating impact in Scotland and our communities are disproportionately affected, those poorest communities are disproportionately

affected and it's the most vulnerable in society that pay the price. And it is very much to the credit of your skills and professionalism that you successfully manage this complex and challenging group on a daily basis.

I am pleased to hear that there has been positive progress in pay negotiations and that an offer from the Scottish Prison Service has been made. I understand the significant cost pressures most people are facing, including prison officers, and our hope is that this offer will go some way towards meeting those challenges. And I want to thank all the unions for their constructive engagement in this process, but of course I do appreciate that there is a ballot and that that ballot is ongoing. I am proud of our Scottish approach to industrial relations; this year is the 20th anniversary of the Partnership Agreement that is in place between the Scottish Prison Service and trade unions, and it remains a strong and very positive part of industrial relations in our prisons in Scotland. The value of this is evident when you look at what has been achieved in the Prison Service over the life of the Partnership Agreement compared to other jurisdictions and other prison employers. This year I was pleased to see the opening of HMP YOI Stirling, Scotland's new national facility for women. It has delivered a significant step change to the management of women in custody, many of whom are vulnerable and have significant experience of trauma and adversity. This also is a significant change for the staff who work there who are supporting the women towards a new and a more settled path in life, enhancing their wellbeing and helping to prevent reoffending. And I am struck by the difference that prison officers have already made contributing to significant changes, for example, as I mentioned in the treatment of young people and women, that have improved justice services and justice outcomes in Scotland.

Looking ahead and keeping abreast with progress on the replacement prisons for both HMP Inverness and HMP Barlinnie, while the current financial climate with high inflation has brought some uncertainty to costs and timescales, we remain absolutely committed to building HMP Highland and HMP Glasgow. We need to ensure that we have a prison estate that is fit for purpose for those who live and work there and supports the rehabilitation of people in our care. HMP Highland will be the first net zero prison in Scotland and will allow for more people to reside closer to their home and the community and enhance essential family contact. HMP Glasgow will provide a better quality of

living environment and enable strong relationships with staff and will help those in custody move forward. In March next year we are looking forward to welcoming HMP Kilmarnock into the public sector. I visited Kilmarnock in August and I was pleased to speak to staff and to hear about their experiences and understand that robust transition arrangements are in place to make the movement as smooth as possible for everybody affected, and this has clearly been the result of a sustained and early engagement of SPS and Serco with staff and I would encourage this to continue as the transition progresses.

If I can just end, once again, thank you all for your continued commitment, professionalism and hard work in keeping our prisons safe and secure. Our Prison Service in Scotland is full of unsung heroes and heroines. The rising prison population poses a particular challenge and I want to reassure you all that, both in a personal and political capacity, I am committed both to action in the longer and shorter term and we are working hard to mobilise a collective effort of Scottish government, Scottish Prison Service and all of our partners in the justice sector to take forward mitigations and the way to safely reduce numbers. On the frontline you all play a key part in this, your skills and expertise allow you to avert crisis and deal with tensions as well as show compassion and support on a daily basis. I am extremely grateful to each and every one of you for keeping our communities safe and for playing your part in changing people's lives. So, thank you very much and I'm really grateful for the opportunity to spend a wee bit of time with you here today.

<Applause>

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks for that Cabinet Secretary, and if you wouldn't mind, I'm going to pose a couple of questions. Feel free to answer them or feel free to take them on board to go away but we'll give you the platform back. Firstly, before I go into that I think it's important that we acknowledge and welcome the amount of establishments which you have visited. Our members, although they use us as sounding boards, they actually like seeing the people in charge so it is very much welcomed and I hope it continues. I know you've said you've committed to going to Stirling next, which I think you'll enjoy that visit and it'll give our members the opportunity to have a discussion with you then, so thanks for that.

Onto a couple of probably the most pressing issues from this Conference that's important to take to you in your capacity. You've already touched on one of them being the rising numbers. I know it's something you're acutely aware of. You commented on HMI PS report, the worrying part of that report is that Wendy herself has said that her predecessors have also had this problem and it dates back many years. I think it is a concern that's always been there but it's getting worse. We've heard here today and you've made public statements on it, that we welcome, but we need to make sure that the hard work actually gets done. I know you mentioned these projects and incentives that you're looking to bring in, but we have to see it through, we have to get prison numbers down because our members are at absolute breaking point with the numbers of prisoners that's coming in. They can't do their job, they don't feel as though they can do their job properly and to what's needed to actually help genuinely reduce reoffending. So, all the work that's going on is important but I can't stress enough from this Conference that our members are at breaking point with the numbers of prisoners that are coming to gaol, so something has to give.

ANGELA CONSTANCE – CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE: Thanks very much for that, and can I give you my assurance that I, even once I've done the first full round of establishments, that I will continue to visit. You'll probably end up being sick of the sight of me to be honest. My office have already commented, I overheard them talking about how I like a wee visit to a prison, to the extent that wherever I go, whether it's elsewhere in the UK or when I visited The Hague in the Netherlands last week. Nothing to do with prisons but to look at their criminal justice and their coach system in particular. I did seek out the opportunity to visit a Dutch prison, but that's something I'll tell you about another time; there were some interesting comparisons, both for good and bad.

In terms of the prison population you are 100% right to press me on this, absolutely right. When I read Wendy's report, and of course her report is very stark, I mean she starts off quoting Charles Hill, a governor from Edinburgh prison in 1979 talking about the evils of overcrowding. So, I can assure you I do my best within government to layout, in the plainest terms, those evils of overcrowding and the consequences that they have, both for prisoners and prison officers, and the consequences are severe. I'm probably known as

somebody within government who's a bit blunt, but plain speaking, not always that elegant, but I do want to reassure you that your message to me today is not missed. And what I wanted to convey to you, in the opportunity that I've had to speak to you today, that you have my political commitment and you have my personal commitment. I think I have a wee bit of insight into what you're facing – I've never walked in your shoes but I have some insight. And it is clear to me that we've had courage in Scotland in the past to embark upon some difficult journeys, whether that's in and around young people and taking that whole systems approach to keeping our young folk out of the Criminal Justice System, because we all know when people become involved in the Criminal Justice System early that sometimes it can be very hard to get them out of that system. And we all know that we need to continue to have courage with the communities who are most badly affected by crime and disorder, and we need to continue to have the courage to engage with those communities about what will actually work at the end of the day to make them safer. And we know that lots of very short-term sentences will not, at the end of the day, make our communities safer. So, politicians like me need to have the courage to follow the evidence and I hope to be able to articulate that in some degree of human speak.

We cannot keep running round in circles. We've been here before in the not too recent past when the prison population reached its peak over 8,300 and this time, we need to see it through. We need to build on the reforms that have already been made, but we need to see it through and, other than getting knocked over by a bus, I'm determined to do that.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks you. I know time is precious so I'm going to steal one more point and hopefully you'll have time to answer it. It's the second probably biggest challenge, and again, we've discussed it here and you'll be aware of it because I know the Chief Executive in the head office has brought it to you and it's around about GEOAmeY, the contract of GEOAmeY. I think it's quite safe to say that the contract is not getting managed to what it should be. I'll be polite with that. What we need to know and what we need to get the commitment from is our already depleted establishments with staff are getting further depleted at important times, on nightshifts and patrol shifts, to carry out a contract that public money has paid for and public money is being required to pay for our members to go out and fulfil a contract that's failing. Now, as I

say, I know the SPS are working on it but I think government have to be well aware of this and have to be doing everything in your power, being in the role that you're in, to... I was going to be a bit flippant there, but to push GEOAmeY in actually delivering a contract that's fit, that will keep our members in gaols to work with prisoners that are in there. Because at this moment in time their time's being wasted running halfway through Scotland and sitting with prisoners for contracts that we're not complemented to do, and therefore, shouldn't be doing.

ANGELA CONSTANCE – CABINET SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE: OK. So, let me reassure you, I haven't visited any establishment in Scotland thus far where nobody has raised the issue of GEOAmeY. Some of your members were good enough to wait until I'd maybe been in the door half-an-hour and some establishments, it's quite interesting, depending on where the visit started, if you started in reception, I would be through the door two minutes and people would rightly be raising the issue with GEOAmeY. The point you make is that every time a prison officer has to step in and take someone to hospital or to a funeral or to some other compassionate visit, that actually means that the public and the Scottish public are paying twice for the same service. That isn't good enough, either for prison officers, it's certainly not good enough for taxpayers. I should, of course, thank your members and prison officers for the time that they have had to deal with the consequences of service failure elsewhere, and I know that many prison officers have went the extra mile and done the extra duty to ensure that prisoners are able to access their right to healthcare, for example.

Again, I want to reassure you that in terms of government we have done our bit to support the Scottish Prison Service to begin to deal with GEOAmeY and to get into the guts of some of the detail and some of the contract issues. I think there is a bigger issue in the longer term about how these services are managed, both for the courts and indeed the Prison Service. And I think while there is much more we could be doing in terms of virtual court appearances etc. to remove the need for so much traffic and movement amongst prisoners, nonetheless we need a service that is safe and is reliable. So, again, I hope I can assure you as much as I can that it is a point well-made and it is an issue very firmly on my radar.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you for that. I'll not take up anymore of your time, but with all good game shows, you don't leave empty handed. So, I'd just like to present you a token of our appreciation for you attending Conference. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

Conference, we're going to break for a tea break. If we could be back in for quarter-to-four, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: ... final session to a start. Motion 83 is now the composite motion with Shotts and the motion that you put through on appeal from Polmont so Shotts to propose and Polmont to second.

Motion 83 - Shotts

ALAN STUART – BRANCH SECRETARY, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 83 reads: That Conference support the following statement to be used by all branches in Scotland in order to repudiate the inappropriate terminology being encouraged by some in the SPS. The statement reads: 'The use of inappropriate terminology has somehow crept into our service. Staff in Scottish prisons should refrain from using phrases like: residents; men; those in our care; service users and rooms. These terms create the wrong impression. They detract from the disciplined service we are and are also insulting to the victims of crime. POA Scotland members are encouraged to use the correct and appropriate terminology 'prisoner' and 'cells' when describing someone incarcerated by the state in prison against their will.'

Conference, it seems like certain elements of management and some operational staff are now using these terms. At Shotts it's predominantly 'those in our care'. Why are staff being encouraged to use these terms? Has someone somewhere decided words like prisoner and cell are now unacceptable because they sound too harsh? We don't know. As the motion states these terms create the wrong impression, the impression that we're running some sort of private business and that prisoners are actually customers who we need to serve. The customer is always right sort of ethos appears to be prevailing and this language is contributing to it. There now seems to be staff who think that their main job role is to provide a service for prisoners. Security, discipline and order seem to

be forgotten concepts. The victims of crime expect prisoners to serve a sentence in prison, not what some newspapers perceive as a holiday camp.

No one's condoning treating prisoners unfairly or infringing on their rights, but the reality is that our members are dealing with the most violent, unpredictable and dangerous people in our society. They're incarcerated by the state against their will, they're prisoners in a prison. Why are some in our organisation attempting to mask this and pretend that it's something else? The result is that prison officers' job roles are devalued and they're viewed as some sort of carer or a jani. It also empowers the prisoners to believe they have a choice to comply or refuse an officer's lawful order. It's affecting discipline. Added to this the victims of crime and their families are aggrieved because their perception is that prisoners are having an easy time and being somehow rewarded when they don't deserve it. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Polmont, anything to add? Anybody else anything to add? Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, delegates. I'd just like to thank both Shotts and Polmont for bringing this forward. There words 'in our care, person in our care,' that's been a particular issue with my colleagues and myself for quite a while now. The term prisoner is a legal definition and Prison Service management don't have the right to change legal terminology. They don't. We should be quoting that back to them every time they use that. Also, there's nothing wrong with the word prisoner, it's not pejorative, it's not an insult. In fact, you just heard the Justice Minister there quote a prisoner, Nelson Mandela. Try taking that definition away from him. Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King. So, there's nothing wrong with it and we should be pushing back on it. Support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Anybody else wish to speak on the motion? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Far be it from me to point something out. I know I like using a lot of words. Those in our care. Four words. One word – prisoner. But we like to write down when we have these things through. I sat at a local chat with some of your senior management team and I

kept using the terminology, 'but the prisoner' and they kept trying to turn it round to, 'those in our care'. Afterwards I had a word and then, as Malky's highlighted it, the prison rules stipulate they're a prisoner. It defines the cell, it defines it in the prison rules. Are we gonna go back and ask the ministers to redefine how the prison rules are worded because it makes more political sense to call it this way? Terminology is great when it's done correctly. It's confusing some of our staff, it's confusing where they're going with things and we need to start saying to people, 'Sorry, stop trying to rejig things just 'cause you don't like the way it sounds.'

To go back to it, actually prisoners, not not correct, but a prisoner is somebody who actually, back in the day, was untried or hadn't been convicted, 'cause the original terminology was convict. But we moved away from that because that was seen as too harsh and all the other things. We need to be watchful what we allow them to do. We need to hold them to account and say, 'Stop changing and reinventing the wheel.' Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Any other speaker? SNC don't have a speaker on this so, Alan, reply to what you've heard?

ALAN STUART – BRANCH SECRETARY, SHOTTS: I just want to say I was speaking to Mark Fairhurst there who said they've already had this problem for a long time down in England. We know that and they had put out a circular with a similar statement, which every time these terms are used to us we just automatically put out that circular to all our members at Shotts to reiterate, 'Stop calling them these things, it's a prisoner.' We sort of designed this tailored to the Scottish context.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 84, SNC

Phil Fairlie on behalf of the SNC.

PHIL FAIRLIE – SCOTTISH ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks, Chair. This motion is asking Conference to acknowledge the significant increase in threats and intimidation by members of organised crime gangs within the prisons on our members. We're asking Conference to mandate the SNC to engage with Unity

Consulting to help assist the POA in achieving a mandatory or minimum sentence for prisoners or those associated with the assaults, threats to staff and their families or damage to personal property, such as the spate of fire raising of staff cars as a means of intimidation or threatening our members for carrying out their roles on behalf of society.

Conference, I think we're all aware of the recent success that Police Scotland, and the Prosecution Service in Scotland, have had in terms of the conviction rates they've achieved in recent years. Not just of those lower down the food chain in the organised crime gangs, but some of the biggest names in Scotland have received sentences for their involvement in organised crime and received longer sentences than they've ever had before. And while the communities that we all belong to I'm sure regard that as a fantastic success, and so do we, what that means is that those people are now all locked up inside our prisons, inside our overcrowded prisons and inside our prisons with the most probably complex mix of prisoner population that we've ever had all in the same place at the same time. What that means for staff is that as well as the challenges that come with the things I've just listed, you've got a group of organised criminals operating inside our prisons who, let's be honest, will never stop operating. The people that are in there, what they're involved in is far too lucrative, there's far too much money to be made from it for them to stop simply on the back of a prison sentence. So they continue to operate as and when they can and they use attempts to intimidate, threaten, coerce staff where they can inside the organisation; they are using recruitment as an attempt to get their own people inside the prisons to continue operating for them. That's the kind of scale of the stuff that we're talking about that's going on and the staff are having not deal with that on top of everything else that they're coping with inside the prisons.

Violence has always been an issue for prison officers, it's always been a thing that's associated with working in that environment. I think the level of threat that we're talking about and the type of activity that's going on, it probably takes it to a different level. There are two cases that I am dealing with myself just at the moment that have gone beyond anything I have ever seen, or the Prison Service has ever seen in the 30 odd years that I've been around. We're not talking about a threat of violence, we're talking about a plan that was put in place and that started to be implemented, not to threaten, not to injure, but to murder to prison

officers. The impact that had on the individuals, I don't need to describe it to you, you can imagine what that means for them and their family. They were unceremoniously removed from their house for long periods of time with no notice, people were found in the street with an attempt to carry out the attack that we're talking about and this was direct links to organised crime gangs who targeted the two individuals for doing their job. That's the kind of level that we're talking about.

And we've been well aware of the violence inside prisons throughout all the time that we've all been in this job and far too often when it goes to court, we've watched either Procurator Fiscals never letting it get to court because they don't take it seriously enough or when it gets to court sentencing sheriffs regard what's going on as being just a thing that you associate with the role of being a prison officer. It's almost acceptable to them and it's something you need to suck it up and accept that it comes with the territory of the job. That's never ever been acceptable to us as a trade union. And given that the levels that we're talking about now, I'm now going to go onto something that I think is beyond what any of us have ever experienced before, we need to do what we can to start to tackle that. We need to organise a campaign to make sure that the public... because I have to say the public are pretty ignorant themselves in terms of the work that means for prison officers trying to carry out their role on behalf of members of the public. They can have a similar view to some of the sentencing sheriffs around – it goes with the territory of the role. We need a campaign that gets out there and publicises exactly what the threats are, the intimidation and the fear. The firebombing, that's all been in the press, they recognise that but they never give it another thought the minute they turn the page. We need to use what tools we've got available to us. Unity Consulting, we know from the kind of campaigns they've run before, we've looked at the materials, we've talked to them about how we get our message across, what doors to open and how we start to get into the public psyche around this issue.

What we're looking for is to create a campaign that leads to an automatic custodial sentence for anyone who's found guilty of either assault to prison officers or an attempt to intimidate, damage to public property or threats to their families for carrying out their role as prison officers. We want a mandatory and a minimum sentence for anyone who's involved with that and convicted in the courts. We're looking for a mandate from

yourselves to involve Unity Consulting in the best way to run that campaign, the best way to get the public profile of what we're talking about raised and to take that forward. We're asking for your support, thanks.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Phil. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. Fully support this motion and indeed the campaign that Phil's just mentioned there now. I think Shotts has had their third vehicle that's been petrol bombed. We've also had two houses with their windows smashed and threats made against them. I think one of the things we really do need to point out is that the SPS themselves have to start taking this seriously. We have had staff putting prisoners on report for various accusations, 'I'm gonna do you and I know where your family is.' In fact, we had one member of staff who got sent their full family tree of his family saying, 'We know where you children go to school.' And then when they go to an orderly room – cautioned, yet somebody who doesn't go to work we'll take their tele off of them and give them twelve all round, etc. There has to be an understanding from the organisation just how severe this actually is.

And what's actually happening now as well is it's now become blasé for the prisoner population who think they can just come up and go, 'I'm not going to my work. If you give me an order, I'm gonna go and get your weans.' This is happening, colleagues, blatantly in front of us and they're getting away with it. As Phil says, this has to be a campaign now that goes to the Law Lords where we turn round and say, 'Zero tolerance is exactly what that is, a zero tolerance.' That they now think in prisons that they can come up and threaten us and nothing's gonna happen to them because nothing actually does happen to them. Please support this, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Any other speakers? Edinburgh.

GORDON FERRIER – BRANCH SECRETARY, EDINBURGH: Chair, SNC, Conference. Just to reinforce what Phil Fairlie said, we had an incident at Edinburgh recently regarding a direct threat to a member of staff, possibly the one that Phil's talking about. So, the threat is out there, without doubt. And also recently we had a car set

on fire, arson attack, the first time I can remember in my 30 plus years, and certainly the first one at Edinburgh anybody can remember. So, the threat is clearly out there, so very much support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Edinburgh. Any other speakers? Going to the vote then, all those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 84a – Polmont.

OK, do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, motion falls.

Motion 85 – Grampian.

SAM BARTON - GRAMPIAN: Chair, Conference. Motion 85 reads: Following the issuing of circular 11/23 Conference mandate the SNC to engage with the SPS on the continued failings of GEOAmeY escorts contract, and the increasing and continuing burden on SPS staff to conduct these escorts. We believe that suitably equipped vehicles should be supplied and proper risk assessments conducted to ensure our members are properly protected while picking up the failings of GEOAmeY in delivery of this service.

This came from the Control just having to put staff out, I think somebody referenced it, to go ahead, wasn't going ahead, prisoner was being quite difficult, was told he couldn't go, we stepped in to cover the escort and he reared up in the back of a Prius. He was a big unit. There was two staff in the back with him and a driver and he's causing hassle. They returned to the prison but just the fact there's no Perspex, there's nothing in these cars. If we're gonna have to be picking these up, whoever's in charge of the car fleet, have a look. Get back to transits or something, something a bit more spacious, a bit more protective for staff to do it. That's all we're asking. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Grampian. Can I have a seconder for the motion? Inverness, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, Conference. Thanks Grampian, for bringing this forward. I was quite vocal at our comms meeting about us having to pick up the tab for GEOAmeY doing escorts and all the rest of it, because I was very much aware of the

pressures getting put at our establishment, which isn't as bad as some other establishments, but it was biting because of our staff levels; we're under complement and our staff sick. What came to light was, after Grampian's incident that happened with that, it was kept quiet. So much so, that when I went and spoke to my head of ops at the time, and my dep governor, says, 'What are we going to do?' I said, 'Well, there's nothing we can do because we don't have the vehicles. We can't get the vehicles.' I said, 'But you just had an incident that could've went seriously wrong up in Grampian.' 'How'd you hear about that?' Come on, you think we don't talk to each other? I don't want us, our members, to be the people that have to pick up the burden for GEOAmeY. GEOAmeY should be getting that sorted and the government should be sorting it and the SPS should be sorting it. What we need to do for our members is have a fall back that says, 'You will go out in a secure vehicle that keeps our members safe.' There's a reason why GEOAmeY introduced those box vehicles and have got certain other vehicles that they use for transportation of prisoners. There's a reason for that. We used to have that. To go back in the day we had a van that had bars and all the rest of it. I was out on a C-cat escort one time to a hospital, the guy was supposed to be safe, secure are, but he went banzai in the back of the van. It was a secure van, and luckily for me the driver drove up to Edinburgh and we got it sorted out. But we are sending staff, with little or no experience of doing escorts, in a car that's literally a Prius or whatever else they can get, hired from Avis with no safeguards whatsoever. That's not safe for our members. It's not safe and secure for the prisoner or anybody like that. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Any other speakers? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference. The SNC is for the motion. The SNC has already raised concerns regarding the issue and continue to discuss the matter when and where necessary. Our concerns have been communicated to the employer and they're also evident in our regular updates to the branches. Grampian believe that suitably equipped vehicles should be supplied and proper risk assessments should be done, and we couldn't agree more. The SNC were on hand recently to support a number of branches when local governors were trying to circumvent their legal obligations and duty of care to staff. We will continue to monitor the situation and continue to support

branches when the need arises. What actually doesn't help our case or cause is when our own members fail to take the advice we give them and they're putting themselves and they're putting others at risk, but we do support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Grampian, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 86 – SPSC & HQ.

PAUL DUFFIN – BRANCH CHAIR, SPS COLLEGE/HQ: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 86 reads: That the SNC enter discussions with management regarding the escorting of prisoners by the SPS staff if directed to do so. To ensure appropriate vehicles are available, properly risk assessed with comms on board and screening to ensure staff safety. Potentially reverting to processes in place prior to the takeover of escorts from the SPS in 2003.

It's been said before in a couple of motions we're carrying out these escorts. We're not complemented to do them; we don't have staff to cover it. I'm led to believe we're not restricting regimes to allow it to happen, but we're picking up the pieces of a £240 million failed contract, eight-year contract by GEOAmev. They were the only organisation that tabled a bid for it. The other two, Circo and G4S walked away from the table realising that they could not make a profit from it. GEOAmev are finding it hard to recruit staff because they're offered more money working in a supermarket. Please support the motion, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, SPSC/HQ. Shotts to second.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. I'm gonna second this motion on the basis that 85 and 86, and indeed I feel 89, are all very similar. Our motion's 89, so I'm gonna speak on this instead. Shotts went into dispute with our senior management team on the escorts when they decided to go out and buy a minibus, brought it into the gaol and then me and Alan sneaked down to have a look at the minibus. We went on the minibus and we drove about for a wee bit – we could jump forward, slap the driver round the head, we then jumped onto the side bit, opened up the door, jumped out while it was still moving. It was only going about two mile-an-hour, but it was just to prove a point for what the dual

vehicles we used to have. So, the dual vehicles we used to have was a minibus with a number on the roof, communications inside it, we used to sit either on the left or on the right and you couldn't get out the doors at the side, or indeed, at the back and there was a shield behind the driver. We put that in, we went to dispute and we put in our risk assessment at the back of it. In our risk assessment we took into consideration: access egress to the vehicle; the seating plan; a proper staff briefing; vehicle driver safety and driver requirements. One of the things we picked up on was that the driver requirements for a minibus has now changed, so a D1 license was a minimum, but because we are using it to escort them, it doesn't count anymore; you've gotta have a PCV license in order to drive these vehicles.

So, what they did at Shotts was we got a phone call from the deputy governor, 'Guys, listen, we've gotta put somebody out to court, we've got no choice but we're putting him in a car.' And we're going, 'But yeah, we've just put a Failure to Agree in on a minibus.' 'Yeah, yeah, I know, we get that but you never said anything about a car.' And I'm going, 'Are you looking at this with a bit of common sense? A car's smaller than a bloody minibus.' At which point he says, 'Ah, right.' I goes, 'We're gonna put a PFT on this one then 'cause we've not mentioned the word car.' 'It's too late, he's already in the gate lock and he's on his way.' They waited to tell us when they were in the gate lock to sneak this in. And to make it even worse, he's a segregation prisoner. They took out the segs and the staff went out with him and he's sitting right behind the driver! Now, one of the things that we have got on the back of this, and this was a headline, 'Safety fears as prisoners transferred from Scottish prisons in ordinary cars. Dangerous prisoners are being ferried between court and gaol in ordinary unmarked cars rather than prison vans and custody officers', 'cause that who it was at the time, 'have had their lives been put at risk.' So has SPS staff but they're still going ahead and doing it. So, we have to ensure, for our members, that everything's in place in order to say, 'You want us to carry this out, give us additional staff, give us the correct vehicles, bring in the bloomin' driving trainers that we used to have in the old days and put comms in the thing.' And then what they says to us as well, 'If it breaks down at the side of the road, phone recovery.' What recovery? Who am I phoning? Is the AA gonna come out when I've got a bloomin' dangerous prisoner sitting on the side of a hill, 'cause you have

to leave the vehicle! And then if it breaks down in the middle of bloomin' Glasgow somewhere, what are you doing at that point when everybody's all staring at you and a guy goes, 'Ah, that's my mate, my gov, we're gonna go and free him, there's only two warders there.' So please support these motions, thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Any other speaker? John Devine on behalf of the SNC.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference, we fully support this motion as well. Hopefully I covered where we are in relation to this issue on motion 85. I must also point out at this stage your union local appointed safety reps, they've got a critical role to play in achieving the sentiments of this motion. John alluded there to an example, which I'm very familiar with. It wasn't a risk assessment that a local branch put in, because that's not their obligation to do that, it was written representation they made and the employer would then conduct their risk assessment under Regulation 3 of the Management Regs. The SNC can discuss this issue with the employer until we're blue in the face. What we also need though is we need local appointed safety reps at local branches to make written representation to the employer within the context of their functions that are contained within the SRSC Regulations. By doing this we will encourage the employer to meet its legal obligations but please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. SPSC/HQ, right to reply. No. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 87 – Barlinnie.

MICK MULLHOLLAND – BRANCH CHAIR, BARLINNIE: Conference, Chair. Motion 87 reads: That the SNC approach the employer and seek a ban on prisoners vaping within prisons due to the risk it poses to staff and prisoners.

While it's generally accepted that vaping is less dangerous than smoking there are still risks associated with smoking vapes. Our members are facing two issues with vaping. The first one is the prisoners modify the paraphernalia to facilitate drug use. Unfortunately, the vape is the perfect vehicle for ingestion of NPS, as the majority of the NPS is introduced through paper, the vape heats the

contaminated paper to the perfect temperature where the drug is realised without the paper actually burning. Normally staff would smell the burning and be aware of possible drug use, however, with the vape staff are denied this opportunity which puts them at further risk.

Secondly, there are health risks associated with vaping. John Hopkins Institute states there is emerging evidence that vaping and secondary vape is bad for your health. There are many unknowns about vaping, including the chemicals that make up the vapour and how they affect our physical health over a long period of time. People need to understand that eCigarettes are potentially dangerous to your health; there are direct links to chronic lung disease and asthma. As with smoking, there is further evidence, vaping doesn't produce smoke it exposes people to risk through secondary vapour, that vapour contains nicotine and chemicals, many of which are unknown. Surely, it's incumbent on us, the trade union, to pressurise our employer to reduce all risks that our members are exposed to, so that our members are not faced with the ludicrous situation they face with smoking, that being exposed to tobacco smoke for 11 years longer than necessary. I ask Conference to back this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Barlinnie. Got a seconder for the motion? Polmont, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Jim McCabe on behalf of the SNC.

JIM MCCABE – SNC VICE CHAIR: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the SNC, fully supporting the motion. Two issues there that Barlinnie raised. First of all, regarding the actual smoke, so vape smoke can linger up to an hour in enclosed spaces – prisoners are in their cell, that's an enclosed space so it can be in there. Second-hand nicotine vapes, while they've not all got nicotine in them, but the ones that have got nicotine in them, the exposure will increase the risk of bronchitis and other respiratory diseases. Some of the chemicals used in the vapes can contain lead, nickel and arsenic, which your members once they go in and breath it in. Also, passive vape smoke can stay in the blood for up to ten days. We support it on that alone, that this is a risk to our membership.

But actually the security issue gives me more concern as well. The fact that when they're enhancing the other drugs that they're using and you cannot smell the paper and staff are going into a place, whereas before if you'd have smelt the

paper burning, you'd go, 'Better watch out. This guy might be two or three to the door. But if you don't smell it and you open the door and you've got somebody ultra-high because of the enhanced way that it's affected the drugs, that's a major risk for our membership. So, it may require a change in the prison rules, however, we'll deal with that when we can but I ask you to support the motion, please.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim. Barlinnie, right to reply? No. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 88 – Glenochil.

KIRSTY DALGLEISH - GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, Conference. The motion reads: This Conference mandate the SNC to engage with the employer to bring the Control and Restraint PPE up to date and rectify an aging supply of protection equipment, some of which is unfit for purpose.

As I say this is something that is raised to myself and fellow instructors on a regular basis and to the committee, be it visors lifting up during incidents, the Velcro, the elastic, the boots. When you go up to the training facility you see it all the time, the equipment's just not really fit for purpose. There's better PPE available from other suppliers, which we are hoping can be looked at. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wishing to speak? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we are obviously asking you to support this motion. Conference, what we will say is that some of the issues around the concerns around equipment is the responsibility of the quartermaster and the local establishments and any aging or damaged equipment should be identified and replaced. These establishments have a budget for this and this has been made clear to them on various occasions. What is a concern from this motion is that some of the equipment is now deemed to be unfit for purpose. I'd encourage all branches to engage with their local C&R instructors and quartermasters and identify what these pieces of equipment are and why they're unfit

for purpose. This is a serious breach of health and safety and should be treated as such, please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Glenochil, right to reply. All those in favour, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Motion 89 – Shotts. Conference, give permission for motion 89 to be withdrawn. Any against. Motion withdrawn.

Motion 90 is an SNC debate

The debate will be led on behalf of the SNC by John Devine.

JOHN DEVINE – SNC: Chair, conference, we brought this motion to Conference and it's just to make you aware that this issue is on the employer's radar at this moment in time. We do not believe that it would be appropriate to support any move to Cluster Health and Safety Coordinators in Establishments. We would like to point out that each establishment has its own Health and Safety Policy Document and this is a requirement under the current obligations contained in the Parent Act of 1974. An establishment's policy document should highlight how it intends to organise, plan, implement, measure performance, audit and review its health and safety arrangements. The local health and safety coordinator, in our view, has a duty to maintain arrangements at a local level and any move to centralise the coordinator would undermine and dilute the current arrangements. That's our opinion on it, that's our view. There would appear to be no objective justification to change from the current arrangements that we currently have and each establishment should be responsible for their own arrangements and should have a competent person in place to coordinate those arrangements. Please participate in the debate.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, John. Shotts, come down to participate, thank you.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. We have had two members of the union who are the health and safety coordinators at HMP Shotts who are both retired. They were an invaluable asset, because they're not just there for the management team, who seem to think that they were just there for the

management team. So, we used to utilise them on a day-to-day business when we were, 'What about this, what about that, what does it say in there?' 'cause I'm not clued up in health and safety and it seems to be a unique person who wants to do health and safety, 'cause it bores the life out of me. But, it's actually a very, very good tool and if it's used correctly, you can use it to your advantage, which is what we've done on numerous occasions. So, I can now understand why SPS are looking at clustering 'cause they actually can be used as a bane in their life 'cause you've got them telling them the truth and you've got them telling them why they cannot do something and they don't want to hear why they cannot do something. So no, we shouldn't be clustering the health and safety coordinators, we should keep them as it is.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Anyone else? Glenochil.

BILLY YOUNG – BRANCH CHAIR, GLENOCHIL: Chair, SNC, delegates. Thanks to the SNC for bringing this up because clustering is a worrying word to use, 'cause they've done it with the L&D managers. 'cause you don't have an establishment L&D manager pretty much, they're clustered, they're all part of the College and then you have to get that used elsewhere. Every establishment should have a health and safety officer who's there to safeguard the organisation and safeguard the employees and we, as union representatives, and because they're usually members as well, should have an ability to access that. It's the one piece of legislation that is actually cast iron. At Glenochil prison we've had to put certain things in through health and safety; I recently had, much to Mark's annoyance as well, a lumens battle because my dep governor kept saying, 'We can put somebody out at night, we're allowed to do it.' I went to the health and safety coordinator who says, 'No, you're right, Billy, it's not to an appropriate level.' I've said that to them but they're insisting it's going ahead. I then went and sought further advice elsewhere. Eventually, after three weeks of pointing it out and various triangles they went, 'Aye, you're actually right and it actually does breach health and safety so we'll not be doing that.' It's key to our ability to function in our job and we should have that ability to have a health and safety coordinator in every establishment so you've got access to them. Thanks for the debate.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glenochil. Anybody else wish to participate in the debate? Thank you.

Motion 91 – Grampian.

CHRIS SINCLAIR - GRAMPIAN: Chair, SNC, Conference. Motion 91 reads: That the uniform ordering service to be updated to allow catering staff to acquire polo shirts as part of their uniform in line with other staff working in Offender Outcomes.

Not much to add to this one, it's just to bring it in line with our other colleagues in Offender Outcomes. They're non-public facing, they're not working the landings, therefore they should have the option to acquire polo shirts, as with their colleagues. It's just to bring it in line and make it fair within the Offender Outcomes team. Please support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Grampian. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Dumfries, wish to speak? Anybody else wish to speak? Shotts.

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH CHAIR, SHOTTS: Chair, SNC, Conference. I'm gonna ask you to reject this motion. The catering department wear tunics for a reason, I believe, and it's health and safety. The polo shirts will be not flame-retardant, which I believe some of the tunics that they wear are flame retardant, plus they're cooking with hot oils and various other food stuffs etc. and the actual uniform is there for that purpose and they need it 'cause I've already seen what they come out of that cookhouse looking like. So, polo shirts, no, they'll just be a complete and utter mess, plus it'll be dangerous, especially if they go on fire. They're not fire proof, we proved that when we got changed to going into cells, doing all this caper and all that sort of stuff with white shirts on. So no, please reject this.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Shotts. Any other speakers? Dumfries. Dumfries, 'cause you seconded it you should've spoke at the time, alright, that's fine. Any other speakers on the motion? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. What I'm asking is if we could have a remit for the very point that John mentioned. Yes, we can

look at polo shirts, I'll bring it to the next advisory group on staff uniform, but at the same time we're looking to see if these type of polo shirts can be flame retardant, for all the issues that John mentioned. So, I'm asking for a remit.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Grampian, do you accept the remit? Do Conference accept the remit? Remit accepted, thank you.

Motion 91b – Polmont.

TAM COFFEY – BRANCH CHAIR, POLMONT: Chair, Conference. This motion reads: To allow uniformed staff the option to wear polo shirts or shirts.

This was brought to our attention from one of our female members who is suffering from the menopause at the moment and reckons that the polo shirts would be cooler and help the people who's going through the menopause have an easier time. I wish you to support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Polmont. Do we have a seconder for the motion? Glenochil. Wish to speak? Any other speakers. Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, delegates. Just asking to speak against the motion. I fully get the sentiment of the motion in that particular instance, but that's where a reasonable adjustment comes into place. But the carte blanche approach to just staff being able to choose polo shirts, which they will, I think's dangerous territory we go into for a number of reasons; I won't be able to identify my colleague when he's up a section, when he's in a crowd of prisoners. I think, right now, when we've got the uniform, the epaulettes etc. easily identifiable. I think we go into dangerous territory when we start the polo shirt wearing. I've noticed it because we get ... a dig out from Offender Outcome staff in the hall and they tend to come down after their shift with their polo shirt on and right away they're merging in with prisoners. It's difficult to tell these people because we're relying their help, but I don't agree with it. Certainly there's a discipline aspect to this organisation I think we're losing fast, and I think bringing polo shirts in it's hard to argue that we're a disciplined service which we still try to do when we erode the uniform in such a manner. So, I'd ask you to reject that motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Any other speakers? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the SNC. We're asking you to reject this motion. Again, thanks to Malky stealing my thunder, that is the very reasons. You mentioned about the menopause, you touched on that policy, it was involving the menopause policy, there is reasonable adjustments in there. The aspect regarding security, especially in some of these establishments and the size of the halls, you're a distance away. That's why we're asking you to reject this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Polmont, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's lost. At least it got a seconder this time.

Motion 92, Low Moss.

MALKY MCKAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LOW MOSS: Chair, SNC, colleagues. <Laughs> I'll just be honest first, this motion came from somebody that works in ECR, he's probably not wearing a tie half the time. The union seek to remove ties from uniform standards for male colleagues.

The motion speaks for itself, but the proposal's not to be honest with you, so, support the motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Low Moss. Do we have a seconder for the motion? No seconder, the motion falls.

Motion 93 – Grampian.

SAM BARTON - GRAMPIAN: Chair, Conference. Motion 93 reads: That the standard and provision of uniform be addressed to enhance quality and accessibility for staff.

This was put forward, I understand, just to see if there's a better-quality uniform out there, more feasible. I don't know with regards to the accessibility because we're still waiting on the slow boats from China every year, staff are not getting hardwearing, good wearing or if you're long-legged, you get two pair of trousers. Try and get a better quality of uniform, harder wearing, that's it,

that's just the sentiment of the motion. Please support.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Grampian. Do we have a seconder for that motion? Inverness, wish to speak?

ROBERT LEES – BRANCH CHAIR, INVERNESS: Chair, SNC. I ask you to support the motion and bring our uniform in line with the materials that are used by the police, the wicking material seems to be very good and I think we should support the motion. Thank you.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Inverness. Any other speakers? William Reid on behalf of the SNC.

WILLIAM REID – FINANCE OFFICER: Well I know it's the last one, so, responding on behalf of the SNC. Conference, we support this motion and I will raise it as I sit on the advisory group on staff uniform. What I will say, as somebody that's had to go to these meetings and sit through them, I think once I've heard a uniform complaints form being put in. Now, every year we hear about, 'Uniforms this' and 'uniforms that'. I go there with my hands tied behind my back because there's no complaint forms coming in. So, if you've got issues with uniform put your complaint forms in, it helps to support any changes. Please support this motion.

JOHN CAIRNEY – SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, William. Grampian, right to reply. All those in favour of the motion, please show. All those against. Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

Conference, that brings an end to our agenda for this year. Just before I do my closing remarks and bring Conference to a close, just a couple of things for later on tonight and tomorrow. Half-past-eight to quarter-past-nine pre-dinner drinks sponsored by Thompsons in Not Cocktail Bar. Why do I keep saying that? Half-six. Half-past-six to quarter-past-seven Thompsons pre-dinner drinks at Not Cocktail Bar. Half-past-nine in here for the dinner.

I'm refusing to wear glasses and I can't tell 24-hour time either. I need to change that for next year. Half-past-seven in here for dinner. Tomorrow morning breakfast from half-past-seven to nine o'clock and delegates training day starts across in the Regency Room at 9:15. OK, so thanks for that.

So, Conference, as I bring an end to Conference 2023, I'd just like to thank everyone again for the professional manner in which it was held. We were addressed by our Cabinet Secretary earlier on today and she went away with priorities that we had set out, namely high prison numbers need to be tackled and need to be reduced, and GEOAmev need to be addressed to support the operational frontend. You all heard her response the same as I did, so all that's left for us now to do is continue to campaign and continue to work away at getting a solution in place.

I hope the presentation for SPS and Reach Advocacy was helpful. I know some of you found it quite long and boring actually, but you need to take it back to your establishments because you've seen, and we've already commented, the law is changing. So the way we do our work is gonna be changing and we have to make sure we get in at the front and that we control and that we influence how the training's going to look coming in. We've all got important roles to play. You heard the invite that was made when the local training's getting done to make sure we're on it, so please do.

The motion's that were passed is what shapes our business for ourselves going forward, and as usual we'll do our best to deliver on motion's that were passed. Jim Dawson touched on it when he was addressing in front of honorary life members about the new reps that's at Conference. It is nice to see, it is welcomed and it is nice to hear different voices on the motions, so thank you for everybody, all the new reps and also the old timers that are here year-on-year. The motions that you all bring, the work you'd put into your motions, it is welcomed and I know it's on behalf of your members.

Also like to thank everyone that spoke at the Conference, that addressed Conference from Steve Gillan to Mark Fairhurst, to Jenny Carter Vaughan. All the people that addressed you, just place on record thanks to them. Our honorary life members and invited guests, thank you for the attention you gave Conference, I hope to see you back next year. To my SNC colleagues, thanks for the work you all done in preparing the motion responses. I know it's not easy, particularly this year, I know it wasn't easy with the workload, but thanks very much for your research and putting your points across. To Alex and Mike from Tayside Audio, a big thank you for the hard work that, again, you have put in. Alex, I think you annoyed the life out of everybody last night getting the money out of them, so much

so that they just paid to get rid of you. <Laughs>
But thanks very much for that.

Also, a thanks to Kathryn and Peggy for their hard work in preparing Conference, the hard work they do behind there makes it look seamless here, but I know it's far from it. They're still working so I'll carry on. A final thanks for me goes to our stewards, Rab, Garry, Davey and Brandon – thanks very much for all the hard work that you have put in. I know it's not easy, I know you make it look easy but it's not, so thanks very much for it.

So, Conference, thanks very much for all your efforts, all your hard work and I bring Conference to a close, thank you.

<End of recording>