

## **Nicola Sturgeon - First Minister**

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### **First Minister – tips**

Nicola Sturgeon is the First Minister of Scotland. She is head of the Scottish Government and our first female First Minister (FM). You can find her biography and responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box times**

The First Minister's box closes Monday to Friday at 4pm.

### **First Minister's private office (FMPO)**

The First Minister's office handles a high volume of information and this volume is increasing. The First Minister receives around 500 emails each day, plus those received in the private secretaries' personal inboxes.

Dealing with such volumes of information means that we greatly appreciate all efforts to cut down on the amount of material the First Minister is expected to look at. Please only send or copy emails to the First Minister's mailbox if they genuinely require the attention of the First Minister or her private office team.

The First Minister only has time to deal with emails or submissions where she is personally required to take a decision, or where it is clear that she must be aware of the contents.

If you are in any doubt, phone private office and discuss with the relevant private secretary, or send the email or submission to the relevant cabinet secretary. They, or their office, can make a judgement on whether it should be forwarded to the First Minister, including whether she needs to be involved in any decision sought.

We also appreciate all efforts to keep advice succinct and timely. Specific guidance on different types of briefing is given in following pages. However, there are some common principles:

- stick to facts: the First Minister prefers to receive key facts and attributable verbatim quotes. She does not find lines to take or Q and A useful except as supplementary material
- keep material short: often one page of bullet points is the most helpful type of background brief
- ensure material is representative of the whole government: getting separate advice from different areas of the organisation on a subject means that it is difficult for us to provide the First Minister with a coherent picture

## Title

For formal occasions, the First Minister should be referred to as the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland.

If you are in any doubt on whether the First Minister should be copied into an email we would always encourage you to give us a phone to discuss further.

## First Minister – speeches

The First Minister's speechwriters are REDACTED and REDACTED. They should be contacted in the first instance for any events where the First Minister is expected to give a speech.

If the First Minister is required to speak at an event you are responsible for, please contact REDACTED or REDACTED as soon as possible to discuss the details of the event, timing of speech and so on. REDACTED usually prefers to receive relevant factual information, rather than a draft speech or bullets arranged as a draft speaking note.

If REDACTED or REDACTED are unavailable, please contact the First Minister's private office to discuss further.

## First Minister - engagement briefing

### Key points

- please ensure that you use the First Minister's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- the First Minister's visits and events team will assist in all logistical aspects of external visits. We do not need extensive directions or maps. Visits and events will contact you if they need your help with logistics
- for external engagements, especially those with a public interest, communication colleagues should be consulted as to what news line, if any, there will be. Briefing should include the background to this
- any official attending an event with the First Minister should note their mobile number in the briefing, and have this phone switched on. This means that we can contact you if we require any last minute information
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. Briefing should tell the First Minister what she needs to know – it should not repeat information that she is already aware of
- speaking notes will be drafted by the First Minister's speechwriting team. Officials should offer assistance to the team by way of discussion and if necessary early sight of briefing
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- all briefing should be quality assured at deputy director level

## External meetings and visits

- maximum of 15 pages unless discussed with First Minister's private office
- cover sheet which clearly outlines the purpose of the meeting and who the key people she is meeting are. If the First Minister is attending an event, her role should also be detailed
- agenda/running order
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- the First Minister does not want Q and A. Please provide any necessary statistics or facts in bullet format which is clear and easy to understand. Information should always be provided in context
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - to be discussed with speechwriters - see speech preferences

## Parliamentary engagements

The First Minister, on occasion, will participate by opening or closing debates, or providing a statement to parliament. First Minister's private office and special advisers will contact the relevant policy area to discuss requirements as appropriate. The First Minister's speechwriting team will work with special advisers on any parliamentary statements or speeches. Policy will be required to provide briefing on the subject matter in line with the requirements above.

## First Minister – submissions

### Key points

- all submissions should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. The First Minister should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from the First Minister
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail the First Minister will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - Routine** (over three days)
  - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - Immediate** (within 24 hours)Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that the First Minister is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling

- submissions that require the cabinet secretary and the lead minister, or the cabinet secretary and First Minister to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## **First Minister - correspondence**

### **Letters**

If you are required to draft a letter on behalf of the First Minister, we would advise that you speak to the relevant portfolio private secretary, who will be able to offer a steer on what key points should be added to the letter.

We would ask that letters are proof read in advance and all spelling and grammar is checked before being sent.

### **Emails**

When sending an email to the inbox, it is helpful to the team to indicate whether this is for the First Minister's information or whether a decision is to be made. The team is more than happy to discuss any submission with you and we would encourage you to discuss with us by phone or face to face in advance.

## **First Minister - contacts**

### **Private office**

Principle Private Secretary	John Somers	REDACTED
PS/PPS	REDACTED	REDACTED
Private Secretary	REDACTED	REDACTED
Operations Manager/Private Secretary	REDACTED	REDACTED
Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED	REDACTED
Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED	REDACTED
Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Correspondence Team	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Diary Team Manager	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Diary Team	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Diary Team	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Diary Team	REDACTED	REDACTED
FM Diary Team	REDACTED	REDACTED

### **Portfolios**

<b>Communities Social Security and Equalities</b>	REDACTED
• Local Government and Housing	
• Social Security	

<b>Culture Tourism and External Affairs</b>	REDACTED
• Europe and International Development	
• Culture (Katy)	

**Economy, Jobs and Fair Work**

REDACTED

- Business Innovation and Energy
- Employability and Training
- Oil and Gas; Renewables (Martin)

**Education and Skills**

REDACTED

- Childcare and Early Years
- Further Education, Higher Education and Science
- Employability and Training
- 

**Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform**

REDACTED

**Finance and Constitution**

REDACTED

- Minister for Parliamentary Business REDACTED
- Constitution REDACTED

**Health and Sport**

REDACTED

- Public Health and Sport
- Mental Health

**Justice**

REDACTED

- Community Safety and Legal Affairs

**Rural Economy and Connectivity**

REDACTED

- Transport and Islands

REDACTED

**UK Negotiations and Scotland's Place in Europe****First Minister Logistics/Briefing/Forward Planning**

REDACTED

## **Michael Russell - Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe**

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### **Michael Russell - top tips**

Michael Russell MSP is the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the [gov.scot](http://gov.scot) website.

- feel free to pick up the phone to private office at any time. We will happily provide further advice and help where we can - don't ever be stuck
- we are based in the fifth floor of St Andrew's House, Mondays, Fridays and Tuesday mornings. We are in the fourth floor of the Scottish Parliament the remainder of the week
- Mr Russell's constituency is in Argyll and Bute. His constituency days are Mondays and Fridays. Contact private office if you wish to discuss events which may fall on these days. Copy the Minister into any business affecting his constituency area
- Mr Russell has a room on the fifth floor in St Andrew's House, which he likes to use on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings where possible. His room number in Parliament is T4.43
- briefing should usually be provided at least two days ahead of an event. If it is a big set piece event, such as a parliamentary debate or lecture, it should be sent a week in advance
- Mr Russell speaks at around 120-130 words per minute. For the majority of events he will adlib. Unless it is a big set piece event, Mr Russell prefers bullet points for speaking notes. This should be the key points he should mention, not a verbatim speech with bullets. For big set piece events, he requires a verbatim speech. A meeting should be arranged with him to talk through the speech content. A draft should then be submitted at least a week, preferably two, in advance for Mr Russell's consideration
- Mr Russell likes to be made aware of issues as soon as possible. He does not like to hear about things second hand. Contact private office to make them aware of any urgent issues. If you are sending an urgent email to the box, contact private office in advance to make them aware
- Mr Russell should be copied into anything which is relevant to his portfolio interests
- Mr Russell's box closes at 4pm on a Thursday - contact private office if you need to send anything out with this time

### **Speeches**

- for the majority of events Mr Russell will adlib. Bullet points for the key points he should raise are preferable (this should not be a verbatim speech broken into bullets). As a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech
- for big set-piece events (private office can advise further on these) Mr Russell likes his speeches to be written in verbatim. It is important that all speeches reflect his

personality, so he likes to meet with officials in advance to discuss the content. A draft should then be submitted at least a week in advance, preferably two weeks where possible, for Mr Russell to consider and provide feedback

- Mr Russell speaks at about 120 words a minute
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken
- always feel free to contact private office if you are unsure of anything. We can advise you on possible content based on the Minister's recent activity

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.

### **Engagement briefing**

- use Mr Russell's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- keep briefing as short as possible, relevant and avoid duplication. It should contain only the key facts and anything new that Mr Russell is not aware of
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents and contain page numbers. See speeches for more
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office. Ensure that mobile numbers are provided and that the phone is switched on. This means that we can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track changes or make them very clear in the covering email
- ensure that communication colleagues and special advisers are aware of engagements where necessary, and that appropriate handling arrangements are detailed in the briefing pack
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service. It is also helpful to know if there is a space for the driver to park
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting
- contact private office for further advice or to talk through specific requirements for engagements

### **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

#### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should:

- be short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions

- avoid complex quotes or tables
- have a background note which should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system, but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information.

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Russell is keen that standard replies are used. Read guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Mr Russell should be able to quickly identify what they are required to consider
- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Mr Russell
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Mr Russell will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)



**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)

**Immediate** (within 24 hours)

Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Mr Russell is available to clear it.

Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends

- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, communications officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance
- Mr Russell should be copied into all submissions which are relevant/affect his portfolio interests

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## **Correspondence**

- all ministerial responses should reflect Mr Russell's personality
- they should be person-centred and considerate of the correspondent. Put yourself in the correspondent's position, what response would you expect to receive?
- ensure that the response answers all the points raised, or explains why we can't - they should be as helpful as possible
- do not pad your response with unnecessary SG policy lines - Mr Russell finds this very frustrating
- avoid using jargon or abbreviations
- contact private office if you would like further advice on handling correspondence

contacts

## **Private Office**

REDACTED

Private Secretary

REDACTED

REDACTED

Deputy Private Secretary

REDACTED

REDACTED

Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED

## **Communications**

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED

## **Special advisers**

Ewan Crawford

REDACTED

Elizabeth Lloyd

REDACTED

## **John Swinney - Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills**

John Swinney is the Deputy First Minister of Scotland. He is also the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. His ministerial preferences and office contacts are outlined here.

View his portfolio responsibilities.

### **Advice and briefings**

These should be accurate, clear, concise, relevant and focused.  
For event briefings and policy submissions, ask yourself:

- what are the objectives of the meeting or event
- what information does the DFM need to have to hand to achieve them
- what information can be left out without compromising the objectives
- what does Private Office need to know to ensure an effective meeting

### **Speeches**

The Deputy First Minister uses three types of speeches:

- bullet point aide-memoire
- structured bullet point paragraphs
- full speaking notes
- 

Check with Private Office which is required for your event. Send all speaking notes to the DFM's speechwriter REDACTED for approval before sending to Private Office.

### **Format**

- the DFM speaks at approximately 160 words per minute
- use A4, font Tahoma size 14pt
- 1.5 line spacing
- only use bold to indicate emphasis
- allow time for interventions in parliamentary statements and debates

### **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

Written PQ answers should not start with 'yes' or 'no'.

Oral PQs must be succinct for reading out in parliament. Two paragraphs is too long.

Briefing on supplementary questions should be included.

For inspired PQs, a draft question and answer should be:

- sent to the Cabinet Secretary
- copied to the Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business and Government Strategy, the First Minister, Parliamentary Clerk Scotland, the relevant minister and special adviser

**Box closures**

The box closures are Monday to Friday 5pm.

**Private office**

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence)	REDACTED

**Special adviser**

Contact Colin McAllister on REDACTED

**Communications team**

Contact the team by emailing Communications DFM & Education or call REDACTED

## **Maree Todd - Minister for Childcare and Early Years**

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### **Maree Todd - top tips**

Maree Todd MSP is the Minister for Childcare and Early Years. You can find her biography and responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box**

Ms Todd generally takes a box each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening. Papers she gets on a Thursday will be returned on the Tuesday of the following week unless a response is required sooner. It is always helpful to indicate on your submission or email when you need a response by. Urgent papers can be dealt with by email on Friday and Monday.

### **Diary**

Ms Todd is keen to protect Mondays and Fridays for constituency business as much as possible. She does understand that there will be occasions when an event falls on these days and is happy to consider.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings are generally the best option for visits. Any event taking place outwith the parliament building should only be accepted with the caveat that it is subject to parliamentary business as Ms Todd will need to be granted slippage.

The diary fills up quickly so it is helpful to have as much notice as possible of potential events. Dates can be held as 'possible' if you give us notice, but the time may be used if not confirmed.

When an event is confirmed in the diary, private office will issue a meeting request to the lead official requesting briefing. Please always let us know as soon as possible if there are any errors in this or if timings/location change. This can have a knock-on effect for the rest of the day.

### **Official support**

Official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office.

### **Chats**

Ms Todd is happy to have a chat whenever needed, either face to face or on the phone. She does appreciate how busy everyone is, so if a chat would be helpful or reduce the need to prepare submissions then do let us know.

### **Special advisers (SPADs)**

Please ensure you involve SPADs in various processes and seek their input and advice before submitting to the Minister. This includes submissions, Parliamentary Questions (PQs) and comms items etc.

### **Speeches**

#### **Speaking engagements (conferences, meetings, receptions etc)**

Pre-meetings will be arranged in advance (where time allows) to discuss Ms Todd's requirements.

Ms Todd would be grateful for full speeches. Please try to submit these at least a week in advance.

### **Debates/committee**

Full speaking notes are required. However, debate closing speeches should be topped and tailed and include key messages and rebuttals.

### **Tips**

- it is helpful to have first drafts of speeches as early as possible. Private office will usually set a deadline and pre-meetings should be arranged, but please ask if this hasn't been done
- avoid jargon
- read speaking notes aloud to check fluency
- consult special advisers and comms colleagues about political and media interest

### **Format**

- Arial font 16pt
- 1.5 line spacing
- page breaks at the end of a paragraph
- pages numbered
- include a word count and estimated time of delivery

**Please ensure the following box is completed and included as page one**  
(a copy is included in the briefing template)

### **Speech Box**

Clear message of speech -

Layout of room - round table, theatre style etc. -

Lectern or sitting as part of a panel?

Make-up of the audience?

How many are attending?

What do they want to hear?

Any media interest?

Have special advisers and communications colleagues been consulted?

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

### **Engagement briefing**

Please consider the event being attended and ensure the level of briefing is appropriate.

Short visits do not require a lengthy briefing pack.

Make sure you use the briefing template.

### **Dietary requirements**

Ms Todd is vegetarian.

### **Key points**

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure mobile numbers for supporting officials are included
- speaking notes should always be included as separate documents
- if amendments are required after the briefing has been submitted, please track changes or make it clear in the covering email
- background information can be provided in FMQ format if appropriate
- if a previous meeting has happened, please include a note of progress since
- always consult communications colleagues in advance of events and ensure special advisers are sighted

### **Parliamentary Questions**

#### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the Scottish Government's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, please use the standard reply that points to that information.

Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerk's office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Todd should be able to quickly identify what he is required to consider
  - a standard template is available as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
  - it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Todd
  - keep submissions as short as possible
  - do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
  - make sure each page is numbered
  - remove all template comments and any tracked changes
  - use the correct priority timing
    - Routine** (over three days)
    - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
    - Immediate** (within 24 hours)
- Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate,

call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Todd is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends

- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally special advisers and comms should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## **Correspondence**

### **Key points**

MACCS – Ms Todd is keen to be as helpful as she can when replying. Please try to ensure any points made in the letter have been addressed and questions answered where possible. If necessary you can provide a PS minute detailing additional info/advice not for inclusion in the reply.

When preparing a diary case, please ensure communications colleagues have been consulted so that Ms Todd can consider this along with policy advice and thoroughly consider the merits of attending.

Use the letter template for all MACCS cases.

For all correspondence, always begin with a thank you for sending the original email/letter and refer to the date it was sent. If our response is late, please provide an explanation. If the original correspondence was sent to another minister but Ms Todd is replying, please also make that clear.

**Replying to MSPs** – ensure you use the reply address provided. MACCS will often default to the parliament.

**Contact details** – if replying to an invitation, please ask them to contact REDACTED at MinisterCEY@gov.scot

**Font** – Arial, size 12

**Language** – consider the recipient and tailor appropriately

**Sign off** – ministerial reply – **MAREE TODD**

**PS reply** – REDACTED  
Private Secretary



## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Private Secretary  
Deputy Private Secretary

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Email: MinisterCEY@gov.scot

The ministerial mailbox should always be used. Personal mailboxes are not checked regularly.

### **Communications**

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Communications Manager  
Media Manager

REDACTED  
REDACTED

### **Special advisers**

Kate Higgins  
Colin McAllister

Special Adviser to the First Minister  
Special Adviser to the First Minister

REDACTED  
REDACTED

## **Shirley-Anne Somerville - Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science**

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### **Shirley-Anne Somerville - top tips**

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP is the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box**

Ms Somerville generally takes a box on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Papers she gets on a Thursday will be returned on the Tuesday of the following week unless a response is required sooner. It is always helpful to indicate on your submission or covering email when you need a response by. Urgent papers can be dealt with by email on Friday and Monday.

### **Diary**

Ms Somerville is keen to protect Mondays and Fridays for constituency business as much as possible. She does understand that there will be occasions when an event falls on these days and is happy to consider.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings are generally the best option for visits. Any event taking place out with the parliament building should only be accepted with the caveat that it is subject to parliamentary business as Ms Somerville will need to be granted slippage.

The diary fills up quickly so it is helpful to have as much notice as possible of potential events. Dates can be held as 'possible' if you give us notice, but the time may be used if not confirmed.

When an event is confirmed in the diary, private office will issue a meeting request to the lead official requesting briefing. Please always let us know as soon as possible if there are any errors in this or if timings/location change. This can have a knock-on effect for the rest of the day.

### **Official support**

Official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office.

## Chats

Ms Somerville is happy to have a chat whenever needed, either face to face or on the phone. She does appreciate how busy everyone is, so if a chat would be helpful/reduce the need to prepare submissions then do let us know.

## Speeches

**Speaking engagements** – pre-meetings will be arranged in advance (where time allows) to discuss Ms Somerville's requirements. Failing that, an initial outline of the proposed speech would be helpful for the Minister to consider.

**Meetings** – Ms Somerville would like key messages. A steering brief is helpful if the meeting takes a more formal format and Ms Somerville is chairing.

**Debates/committee** – Full speaking notes are required. However, debate closing speeches should be key messages/rebuttals and Ms Somerville will form the speech during the debate.

## Tips

- it's helpful to have first drafts of speeches – including bullets – as early as possible. Private office will usually set a deadline and pre-meetings should be arranged, but please ask if this hasn't been done
- full written verbatim speeches
- avoid jargon
- figures/numbers should be written out in full (with the number put in brackets) i.e. three thousand, seven hundred pounds (£3,700)
- proof read the speaking note aloud to check fluency and natural pauses
- consult special advisers and comms colleagues about political and media interest
- Ms Somerville prefers use of a lectern

## Format

- Arial font 16
- 1.5 line spacing
- avoid splitting paragraphs/sentences between pages
- pages should be numbered at the bottom of each page
- include a word count and estimated time of delivery

## Speaking rate

Ms Somerville speaks at approximately 150 words per minute.

**Please ensure the following box is completed and included as page one:**  
(a copy is included in the briefing template)

## Speech Box

Clear message of speech -

Layout of room - round table, theatre style etc. -

Lectern or sitting as part of a panel?

Make-up of the audience?

How many are attending?

What do they want to hear?

Any media interest?

Have special advisers and communications colleagues been consulted?

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

### **Engagement briefing**

Consider the event being attended and ensure the level of briefing is appropriate. Short visits do not require a lengthy briefing pack.

Ensure you use the briefing template.

### **Key points**

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure mobile numbers for supporting officials are included
- speaking notes should always be included as separate documents
- if amendments are required after the briefing has been submitted, please track changes or make it clear in the covering email
- background information can be provided in FMQ format if appropriate
- if a previous meeting has happened, include a note of progress since
- always consult communications colleagues in advance of events and ensure special advisers are sighted
- never embed documents within documents (we are likely to miss them when printing out)

### **Parliamentary Questions**

#### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Somerville is keen that standard replies are used. Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to Ms Somerville should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Somerville should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Somerville
- keep submissions as short as possible
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - Routine** (over three days)
  - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - Immediate** (within 24 hours)
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate,

call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Somerville is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends

- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## **Correspondence**

### **Key points**

MACCS – Ms Somerville is keen to be as helpful as she can when replying. Please try to ensure any points made in the letter have been addressed and questions answered where possible. If necessary, you can provide a PS minute detailing additional info/advice not for inclusion in the reply.

When preparing a diary case, ensure communications colleagues have been consulted so Ms Somerville can consider this along with policy advice and thoroughly consider the merits of attending.

Ensure you use the letter template for all MACCS cases.

For all correspondence, always begin with a thank you for sending the original email/letter and refer to the date it was sent. If our response is late, provide an explanation.

If the original correspondence was sent to another minister but Ms Somerville is replying, also make that clear.

**Replying to MSPs** – ensure you use the reply address provided. MACCS will often default to the parliament.

**Contact details** – if replying to an invitation, ask them to contact private office at MinisterFEHES@gov.scot

**Font** – Arial, size 12.

**Language** – consider the recipient and tailor appropriately.

**Signature** – left-hand side of letter (not centred).

### **Signoff**

- ministerial reply – **SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE**
- PS reply – **REDACTED** Private Secretary

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
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Email: MinisterFEHES@gov.scot

The ministerial mailbox should always be used. Personal mailboxes aren't regularly checked.

### Communications

REDACTED	Communications Manager	REDACTED
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### Special advisers

Kate Higgins	Special Adviser to the First Minister	REDACTED
Colin McAllister	Special Adviser to the First Minister	REDACTED

## **Angela Constance - Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities**

1. Angela Constance - top tips
2. Angela Constance - speeches
3. Angela Constance - engagement briefing
4. Angela Constance - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Angela Constance – contacts

### **Angela Constance - top tips**

Angela Constance MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

- Ms Constance's twitter account
- ScotGov Fairer twitter account
- Scottish Government's Flickr page for pictures of Ms Constance

Please remember that all of the following is guidance. We cannot cover every scenario, so if you are unsure of anything the best thing to do is contact private office.

### **Briefing**

Briefing for ministerial engagements probably causes more issues than almost anything else. Striking the right balance between providing too much briefing and not covering the key issues is one we have all struggled with for many years. Our ministerial briefing page attempts to provide a useful guide on what Ms Constance believes is the right level of briefing for different levels of engagements.

Providing accurate logistical information in your briefing is paramount. It is often the small things that cause the biggest problems and can sometimes determine a minister's views of a particular event. Please take the time to check our tips for preparing briefing.

### **Working week**

Ms Constance usually spends Mondays and Fridays working in her constituency (Almond Valley). If you wish to suggest her undertaking an engagement on one of those days, please speak to private office at the earliest opportunity. Once the Cabinet Secretary has advertised constituency surgeries it is difficult for these to be changed.

Cabinet meets on Tuesday mornings so it is difficult for Ms Constance to undertake any other type of business then. Wednesday mornings offer the best opportunity for Ms Constance to undertake external engagements without running the risk of being affected by parliamentary business. Thursday mornings are also possible for this, although Ms Constance will usually be required back in parliament for General Questions (if she has one) or for First Minister's Questions (FMQs).

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons are usually a mixture of internal and external meetings, most of which take place at parliament. It is sometimes possible for Ms Constance to take on engagements outside of the parliament but will almost certainly be required to be back ahead of Decision Time at 5pm. All engagements – whether inside or outside of the



parliament – on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday afternoons is subject to parliamentary business and can be subject to change at very short notice. Please ensure your stakeholders are aware of this when liaising with them on any such events.

### **Box times**

Ms Constance takes a box home each evening (Tuesday-Wednesday) and has one delivered on Monday and Friday evenings. The box closes at 4pm each day. If you have something that you want included in that evening's box but won't make 4pm then you need to contact private office.

Private office will provide details of any particular arrangements leading up to, and during, recess. Please contact private office if you want advice on the optimum time in a particular week that Ms Constance has to consider papers. As well as policy papers, the Cabinet Secretary's correspondence, diary queries and PQs go in the box.

### **Communications**

All submissions and emails sent to private office should automatically be copied to REDACTED as the Comms CSSE Team Leader and the comms CSSE mailbox (the latter is not constantly monitored so should not be used in isolation). Where you have been liaising with a particular comms officer they should also be copied in.

Communications colleagues are best placed to offer advice on presentational issues and should be consulted in advance of any submission or proposed engagement coming forward.

### **Special adviser**

Jeanette Campbell is the Special Adviser for the CSSE Portfolio (as well as for Fair Work and Employability issues in the Economy portfolio) and should be consulted in advance on significant policy submissions before coming to private office. Like comms, Jeanette should be copied in to all communications to Ms Constance.

### **Speeches**

Depending on the event, Ms Constance will need either a verbatim speech or bullet points. Details on this can be found below. Whatever type of speech you are writing, Ms Constance likes them to have a clear structure, flowing style and be free of jargon.

Some things to consider before you start drafting:

- Ms Constance dislikes speeches that are obviously a cut and paste from other speeches - or have been designed by committee. Such speeches rarely flow properly
- think carefully about the audience that the speech is intended for. For example, if the audience will principally be young people then don't make it too heavy on policy
- think about what the speech is trying to achieve. Summarise that at the start, then work through the body of the speech with that clearly in mind, then conclude by summarising the key message(s) again. If you aren't clear about what the speech is trying to achieve then it could end up dull or inappropriate, or both

- make sure you know what the format of the event will be. Will the audience be standing or sitting? Will Ms Constance be making the speech from a lectern or from sitting at a table, or possibly from standing in the centre of a room without a lectern?
- a special request from Ms Constance - avoid using clichés and lengthy phrases which can more easily be rendered as 'it is', 'I believe' and 'I think'. Ms Constance doesn't like using phrases such as 'at this moment in time' when you mean 'now' or 'right now'
- always read the speech out loud - that is the best way to pick up on things such as repetitive use of words, or failing to allow for a natural breathing space
- if time/word count is a concern (for example for a debate) then consider highlighting paragraphs in yellow that Ms Constance could drop without affecting the flow of the speech or accidentally omitting key information
- Ms Constance speaks at about 120 words a minute
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should **always** be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected.

## Engagement briefing

When preparing briefing, ensure that you use Ms Constance's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings.

Private office have introduced four separate categories of engagements/meetings to provide guidance on the level of briefing/official support required. However, it is important to note that this is guidance - it is impossible to provide an absolute rule that covers every occasion. Feel free to discuss any aspect of this with private office.

Briefing is commissioned with a deadline of one week ahead of an event. This allows both private office and Ms Constance to look over the briefing. Please note that if briefing is on the incorrect template or doesn't follow the ministerial preferences, it will likely be sent back for revision.

### CategoryType of event

- Level 1**
- parliamentary debates
  - committee appearances

### Briefing pack composition and support

Full briefing.

For example:

- cover sheet
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments (essential)
- likely areas of opposition attack (essential)
- key messages to get across during debate (essential)
- FMQ style briefing notes on key issues (essential)
- additional background information (where required)
- speaking note - see speeches

- historical note including any progress to date
- summary of previous evidence sessions
- briefing should be signed off by deputy director
- official support required - senior policy official/private office

- Level 2**
- Ministerial Working Groups (for example JMWGW)
  - bi-lateral meetings with ministers of other governments
  - meetings with key stakeholders to discuss significant issues
  - major conference/event with key role/speech/question and answer
  - events likely to have significant media interest
- Ideally a maximum of 20 pages to include:
- cover sheet
  - agenda
  - meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired
  - background on key issues to be discussed
  - if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
  - lines to take
  - bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
  - speaking note - if required

Official support expected - senior policy official/private office/comms (although happy to discuss)

- Level 3**
- meetings with external stakeholders (for example, the result of MACCS cases)
  - receptions
  - events, including dinners
- Similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages.
- Official support expected for stakeholder meetings. For others please discuss with private office

- Level 4**
- routine visits/engagements
  - photo-ops
- Logistic briefing only – ideally about six pages

- why Cab Sec/Minister is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key background/issue to be aware of

Usually only private office and/or comms, but please check with private office first

- when an engagement is confirmed in Ms Constance's diary, private office will automatically commission briefing through copying the relevant official/Action Officer into the diary invite. This will confirm the deadline for receiving briefing. This is routinely one week ahead of the engagement which allows private office and Ms Constance to review the briefing and request any changes/additions. If you are unable to meet the deadline, for whatever reason, then you must contact private office to agree an extension

- when preparing briefing please ensure you that you use the correct template. Generally speaking the engagement template should be used for external visits, speaking engagements, parliamentary business (debates and committee appearances) and the meetings template for meetings with stakeholders (and usually where there is an agenda that has been agreed). If in doubt please contact private office
- we would wish to stress the importance of ensuring that all the logistical information within the briefing is correct – including times, location, attendees and so on. It is your responsibility to ensure that this information matches the information in the diary invite – if it doesn't please speak with private office **in advance** of the briefing being submitted. It is no exaggeration to say that incorrect logistical information is a frequent problem with briefing – and one which can easily have a disproportionate impact on an event, or indeed the Cabinet Secretary's view of that event
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- speeches should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speech preferences
- official support at all meetings and engagements is routinely expected and any exceptions to this must be agreed with private office in advance. Where no official support is agreed then a named official (with relevant contact details) must be available immediately ahead of the engagement to answer any last minute requests
- Ms Constance expects an official to play an active part during an engagement, particularly around ensuring that the event runs to the agreed timeline/agenda and in helping facilitate discussion – Ms Constance has stressed that this is particularly important at engagements involving groups or individuals that are perhaps not used to such events
- we appreciate that there is always potential for briefing requiring amendment after it has been submitted. If this is something very minor please phone private office first before re-submitting. As a general rule we would advise that if the event is more than 24 hours away that a full revised briefing pack should be sent up. For events the following day we would ask that a revised briefing pack is sent up but the covering email should very clearly set out what changes have been made. If there is a significant change required to briefing being used that day then you should **always** phone the private office who can advise the best course of action
- the exception to the above rules is for parliamentary debates. Ms Constance will often have been reading her briefing folder for some days and making her own notes on briefing. Where changes are required to be made to such briefing packs we would ask that only the amended Annex is submitted - with a clear note outlining what changes have been made

## Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

### General and Portfolio Questions

General Questions take place weekly (Thursdays from 11.40am to midday) when there are a maximum of 10 questions across all ministerial portfolios - questions are selected at random by the Chamber desk. CSSE Portfolio Questions take place approximately every seventh parliamentary week (Wednesdays between 2pm and 2.40pm) when there are 20 questions selected which will be split between the three CSSE Ministers.

Private office are normally advised on a Wednesday afternoon of the General Questions/Portfolio Questions for the following week. The deadline for draft answers to be with private office is Friday (4pm) for Portfolio Questions and Monday (4pm) for General Questions. Whilst we appreciate that this provides quite a tight initial deadline experience tells us that this means there is much less likely last minute requests on a Wednesday/Thursday morning - much less stressful for all.

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by Jeanette Campbell or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered, or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- **address** all points in the question, but not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be **helpful** in tone
- be **relevant** - no padding
- avoid **repetition**
- use **tables** for complex numerical information
- 

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Constance is keen that standard replies are used.

Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary	REDACTED

### Comms CSSE

REDACTED	REDACTED	Comms CSSE Team Leader
REDACTED	REDACTED	Social Security
REDACTED	REDACTED	Welfare Mitigation
		Local Government
		Third Sector/ Social Enterprise
REDACTED	REDACTED	Housing
		Homelessness
		Community Empowerment
		Regeneration
REDACTED	REDACTED	Poverty
		Fairer Scotland Action Plan (ongoing delivery)
REDACTED	REDACTED	Equalities
		Planning
		Fuel Poverty

### Special adviser

Jeanette Campbell is the Special Adviser for the CSSE Portfolio (as well as for Fair Work and Employability issues in the Economy portfolio) and should be consulted in advance on significant policy submissions before coming to private office. Like comms, Jeanette should be copied in to all communications to Ms Constance.

## **Kevin Stewart - Minister for Local Government and Housing**

1. Kevin Stewart - top tips
2. Kevin Stewart - speeches
3. Kevin Stewart - engagement briefing
4. Kevin Stewart - Parliamentary Questions
5. Kevin Stewart - submissions
6. Kevin Stewart - correspondence
7. Kevin Stewart - contacts

### **Kevin Stewart - top tips**

Kevin Stewart MSP is the Minister for Local Government and Housing. You can find his biography and responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

- Mr Stewart's twitter account
- ScotGov Fairer twitter account
- Scottish Government's Flickr page for pictures of Mr Stewart

### **Briefing**

Striking the right balance between providing too much briefing for ministerial engagements and not covering the key issues is crucial. The ministerial briefing page is a useful guide on what Mr Stewart believes is the right level of briefing for different types of engagements. Providing accurate logistical information in your briefing is vitally important. It is often the small things that cause the biggest problems and can sometimes determine ministers' views of a particular event. Please take the time to check our tips for preparing briefing.

### **Working week**

Mr Stewart usually spends Mondays and Fridays working in his constituency (Aberdeen Central). The preference is to avoid arranging ministerial engagements on constituency days, where possible.

Mr Stewart is available to undertake external engagements on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings as long as he is back at parliament for chamber business by 1.30pm. He can do local/central Edinburgh engagements on Thursday mornings as long as he is back in parliament for General Questions (if we have one) and for First Minister's Questions (FMQs).

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons are usually a mixture of internal and external meetings, most of which take place at parliament. Please be aware that they are always subject to parliamentary business and can be subject to change at very short notice. Ensure your stakeholders are aware of this when liaising with them on any such events.

### **Box times**

Mr Stewart takes a box home each evening (Tuesday to Thursday) and has one delivered on Monday when he is travelling from his constituency. He doesn't routinely take a box on a Friday.

The box closes at 4pm each day. If you have something that you want included in that evening's box but won't make 4pm please contact private office.

Private office will provide details of any particular arrangements leading up to, and during, recess. Please contact private office if you want advice on the optimum time in a particular week that Mr Stewart has to consider papers. As well as policy papers, Mr Stewart's correspondence, diary queries and Parliamentary Questions (PQs) go in the box.

## Speeches

Mr Stewart likes speeches to have a clear structure and flowing style. Some things to consider before drafting:

- think carefully about the audience that the speech is intended for
- make sure you know what the format of the event will be. Will the audience be standing or sitting? Will Mr Stewart deliver the speech from a lectern (his preference for large events), sitting at a table, or standing in the centre of a room without a lectern?
- Mr Stewart prefers full speaking notes (with page numbers top and bottom right flush) and speaks at 120 words per minute. Always include a word count and approximate time at the end of a speech
- think about what the speech is trying to achieve. Summarise that at the start, then work through the body of the speech with that clearly in mind, then conclude by summarising the key message(s) again
- ensure speeches have an introduction and conclusion, flow naturally and any subject changes are linked appropriately
- speeches should be sent to private office at least one week before the event/meeting – speeches for debates should always be quality checked by senior management
- speeches should **always** be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack in Arial font, size 16
- ensure paragraphs don't run over the page, are kept short using layman's terms, avoid jargon and when starting a new subject heading start on a new page
- **always** check facts and figures and do a spell check
- **always** read the speech out loud - that is the best way to pick up on things such as repetitive use of words, or failing to allow for a natural breathing space
- if time/word count is a concern (for example for a debate), then consider highlighting paragraphs in yellow that Mr Stewart could drop without affecting the flow of the speech or accidentally omitting key information

Drafting a speech can be challenging and you may find it helpful to draw on experienced colleagues for advice.

## Engagement briefing

When preparing briefing for Mr Stewart, ensure that you use the preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings.

Briefing will normally be commissioned with a deadline of one week in advance of the engagement. Mr Stewart likes to consider briefings/speeches in advance and identify anything else he thinks should be included. If there is a good reason that you are unable to meet the deadline please contact private office to agree a revised date.



Remember these key points when preparing briefing:

- use Mr Stewart's preferred briefing templates
- briefings should be no longer than 8-10 pages and be with private office one week in advance of the event/meeting unless otherwise indicated. Please note that if Mr Stewart thinks the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing. Speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers, top and bottom right flush)
- don't delete cells from the first page of the briefing template - it should fit on one side of A4 to allow the Mr Stewart to review the details at a glance and follow the format and order
- the summary page for external events should capture the key issues that Mr Stewart can refer to quickly
- additional background briefing should be provided in as logical and succinct a way as possible
- avoid unnecessary repetition between the summary page and the background briefing. You can assume that if Mr Stewart is reading the background briefing, he has read the summary page. In particular, avoid phrasing the same point differently in the two as this can cause confusion
- include a list of meeting attendees and brief biographies (no need for these if Mr Stewart has met them before) of any key people (including a note of previous meetings if Mr Stewart hasn't met them before)
- include an up-to-date/accurate address that has been checked with organisers if necessary
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- you should always take into account any mobility issues. Always aim to arrive at events 15-30 minutes ahead of Mr Stewart so you are able to ensure everything is in place for his arrival and you are on hand to meet him and on time
- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Stewart to do or what they would like to discuss (if a formal meeting), and the format of their event as early as possible. Agendas are essential to help focus discussions – if stakeholders don't provide one you should provide one for our interests to help steer Mr Stewart. If anything is unclear or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office as soon as possible. You should find out, in particular, if Mr Stewart will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after a speech. If so, please make sure that you inform private office
- agendas should be provided for all meetings and it is helpful if they are numbered and in bold
- official support should be provided, unless previously agreed with private office
- officials should draft a short note (action points/flagging up any sensitive issues) post meetings, summarising any action(s) to be taken forward and submit to private office within two weeks of the event taking place
- Mr Stewart likes to write a follow-up thank you letter within a week of visits – please ensure these are routinely submitted for his consideration after the visit, or let private office know if there will be a delay if any follow-up actions are to be included

## CategoryType of event

- Level 1**
- parliamentary debates
  - committee appearances

## Briefing pack and contents

Full briefing, for example:

### For debates:

- officials supporting Mr Stewart in the chamber for closing speeches should use the box template
- cover sheet
- motion
- speaking note (attached as a separate word document)
- content page – all pages to be numbered
- key messages to get across during the debate (essential)
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments (essential)
- likely areas of opposition attack (essential)
- stakeholder views
- key messages/ sensitivities/data
- FMQ style briefing notes on key issues (essential)
- summary of previous evidence sessions
- detailed policy notes (separate page for each one), including achievements and stats
- Q and A – should always include any known questions in sequence, bullet point answers/comments, keep short and to the point
- briefing should be signed off by deputy director
- official support required - senior policy official

### For committee appearances:

- committee agenda (available on parliament website)
- speaking note/opening remarks (approx three minutes max), attached as a separate word document
- contents page – all pages to be numbered
- strategic overview and high level summary of SG proposals/policies – what are we seeking to achieve
- achievements/actions already taken
- stats
- key points

- detailed policy notes (separate page for each one including achievements and status)
- stakeholder views
- key messages/sensitivities/data
- Q and A – should always include any known questions in sequence, bullet point answers/comments, keep short and to the point
- official support required - senior policy official

<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ministerial working groups</li> <li>• bi-lateral meetings with ministers of other governments</li> <li>• meetings with key stakeholders to discuss significant issues</li> <li>• major conference/event with key role/speech/Q and A</li> <li>• events likely to have significant media interest</li> </ul>	<p>Ideally a maximum of 20 pages to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cover sheet</li> <li>• agenda</li> <li>• meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired</li> <li>• background on key issues to be discussed</li> <li>• if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since</li> <li>• lines to take</li> <li>• bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)</li> <li>• speaking note - if required</li> </ul> <p>Official support expected - senior policy official/private office/comms (although happy to discuss)</p>
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings with external stakeholders (for example the result of MACCS cases)</li> <li>• receptions</li> <li>• events, including dinners</li> </ul>	<p>Similar to above but ideally no more than 8-10 pages</p> <p>Official support expected for stakeholder meetings</p>
<b>Level 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routine visits/engagements</li> <li>• photo-ops</li> </ul>	<p>Logistic briefing only – ideally about six pages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why Mr Stewart is attending</li> <li>• when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above</li> <li>• any key background/issue to be aware of</li> </ul>

## **Parliamentary Questions**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

General Questions take place weekly (Thursdays from 11.40am to midday) when there are a maximum of 10 questions across all ministerial portfolios. Questions are selected at random by the chamber desk.

Communities, Social Security and Equalities (CSSE) Portfolio Questions take place approximately every seventh parliamentary week (Wednesdays between 2pm and 2.40pm) when there are 20 questions selected which will be split between the three CSSE ministers.

Private office are normally advised on a Wednesday afternoon of the General Questions/Portfolio Questions for the following week. The deadline for draft answers to be with private office is Friday (4pm) for Portfolio Questions and Monday (4pm) for General Questions. Whilst we appreciate that this provides quite a tight initial deadline, it cuts down on likely last minute requests on a Wednesday/Thursday morning.

Portfolio PQs should be cleared by the special adviser in Word as she doesn't have access to the PQ tracker - you don't need to copy in private office at this point. Once cleared it should be sent up to private office through the PQ tracker.

If a PQ is referring back to a previous answer then it must be worded as follows:

'I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-[number] on [date]. All answers to written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.'

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note which should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked in Q and A format
- avoid using acronyms in answers and include everything typed out in full

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft Oral (not written) answers/background briefing with the special adviser, Jeanette Campbell, in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by special advisers or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered, or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## **Oral PQs**

The following points should be followed when drafting an oral PQ:

- the answer should be short, succinct and to the point
- each concern in the question should be addressed
- complex quotes and tables should be avoided
- write the answer to be spoken, and read questions aloud to ensure they flow
- officials should make themselves available in the time leading up to questions being answered to address any last minute changes from Mr Stewart and always follow up any actions within a week

## **Supplementary questions**

- should be drafted using the same template as the original question and indicated clearly at the top of the page followed by anticipated Q and A
- 

## **Background information**

- facts and figures relating to the subject should be provided in a clear and concise format - bullet points are fine
- Q and A should be provided for potential supplementary questions and provided in a way that is easy for Mr Stewart to get the information and reply
- include live/sensitive issues relating to the subject

Once a question has been answered, the lead official should check the Official Report for factual accuracy.

## **Written PQs**

The following points should be followed when drafting a written PQ:

- the answer should address all the points in the question
- the answer should be as helpful as possible
- the answer should be relevant – no unnecessary background or padding
- ensure all facts and figures are accurate/correct at time of answering the question
- avoid repetition - if several questions are asked and the answers can be combined into one, please do so
- accompanying background note should be kept short, provide context and any additional details Mr Stewart should be aware of
- 

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Stewart is keen that standard replies are used. Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

## **Topical PQs**

There is often a very tight turnaround for topical PQs which are normally alerted to private office just after 2pm on Monday afternoons. Guidance as for Written and Oral PQs apply. The deadline for submitting cleared PQs to private office is 6pm on the Monday. This is so that Mr Stewart has time to clear it before Cabinet on the Tuesday morning, where

possible, and we have a suitable answer to provide to Mr Fitzpatrick's office who also require the answer before Cabinet.

## Submissions

When drafting a submission, please use the submissions template and consider the following points:

- submissions can be provided in a Word document or email
- they should be short, succinct and have an easy to follow structure
- submissions should provide a clear purpose and conclusion/recommendation – even if it's just a note
- all recommendations, decisions required and conclusions should be typed in bold
- always write out acronyms in full before abbreviating them in the text
- use plain English, avoiding technical jargon
- **do not** embed documents in the submission. If a letter forms part of a submission, please send this as a separate Word document (without headers and footers marking them as annexes)
- annexes should be clearly marked
- ensure submissions are clearly marked with their priority:
  - **Routine** – within seven working days
  - **Urgent** – within three working days
  - **Immediate** – within 24 hours (a call should be made to private office before sending the submission)
- restricted documents should be marked accordingly
- proof read your submission before sending, checking spelling, grammar, facts and figures and punctuation carefully
- when sending Objective links, ensure that you also include a Word version of the document
- check copy lists to ensure relevant ministers/officials are included - always copy the Cabinet Secretary into any submissions for information

Once Mr Stewart has considered a submission, private office will feed back comments/clearance as soon as possible.

## Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to all correspondence. Below is guidance on how responses should be drafted. Please bear in mind that Mr Stewart wishes to be as helpful and (if applicable) as sympathetic as possible.

Make sure that you quality check and read your correspondence over before sending up to private office – Mr Stewart is very particular about grammar.

- ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'. Please delete 'Your Ref' and 'Our Ref' if not required, and leave enough space for Mr Stewart to write in the date, the salutation and 'Kind regards'. The Minister's letters are left aligned, including letter references, the date and name at the bottom – the Minister's name should always be in bold left flush – **KEVIN STEWART**

## Diary invitations

Make sure you consider the following before submitting a response:

- all invitations addressed to Mr Stewart should be replied to by his private office even if another cabinet secretary/minister is to take on the engagement on his behalf
- if another cabinet secretary/minister is going to undertake an engagement, the last paragraph should ask the correspondent to contact the relevant diary secretary
- all diary acceptance letters should be 'subject to parliamentary business' unless the event is out with parliamentary session, during recess
- do not use diary commitments of parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it's true
- sound advice should be received from both policy and communications and included in the PS minute to allow Mr Stewart to arrive at the correct decision
- consider whether officials could agree to fulfil the commitment
- diary responses can be brief

## Language

- consider who will be reading the response, for example young people
- ensure that the reply is clear, concise and written in a language that is easily understood - it should answer the question and show empathy. (Please also bear this in mind when drafting Official Replies)
- keep sentences short, use layman's terms and avoid technical jargon
- Scottish Government should be used explicitly where appropriate - do not shorten to 'Government'. Where the reference is to the 'UK Government', say so
- if a case is reallocated to Mr Stewart, the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for x issue' should be used
- avoid negative terms and phrases
- always add at the end of letters - 'I hope this is helpful'
- always spell check and proof read responses

## Layout

- use Mr Stewart's template if out with MACCS
- do not alter the default page set up
- try to fit the reply on one page but do not decrease the font size to do so
- leave seven lines free at the top and bottom of the text to allow Mr Stewart to write the salutation and 'Kind regards' before his signature
- Mr Stewart's letters are left aligned, including letter references, the date and name at the bottom – the Minister's name should always be in bold left flush – **KEVIN STEWART**
- if Mr Stewart's name is the only text on the second page, please insert an appropriate page break to ensure at least two sentences are on the second page

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Private Secretary  
Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Please feel free to pick up the phone to private office at any time - we will happily provide further advice and help where we can.

## **Jeane Freeman - Minister for Social Security**

1. Jeane Freeman - top tips
2. Jeane Freeman - speeches
3. Jeane Freeman - engagement briefing
4. Jeane Freeman - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Jeane Freeman - submissions
6. Jeane Freeman - correspondence
7. Jeane Freeman - contacts

### **Jeane Freeman - top tips**

Jeane Freeman MSP is the Minister for Social Security. You can find her biography and responsibilities on the gov.scot website where you can also download images of the Minister.

- Ms Freeman speaks at around 130 words per minute
- all speeches provided to Ms Freeman should be in bullet points (factual information), apart from chamber debates or opening remarks at committee which should be a full read-out speech
- Ms Freeman expects officials to attend all ministerial events and meetings
- thank you letters should be prepared to be sent out no later than three days after a visit
- **all** briefings must be with us before 12 noon on the requested date
- submissions should clearly indicate whether they are routine, immediate or urgent
- Ms Freeman's constituency days are Mondays and Fridays
- the box closes at 3pm on Monday to Wednesday and 4pm on a Thursday and Friday

### **Speeches**

- all speeches provided to Ms Freeman should be in bullet points (factual information) apart from chamber debates or opening remarks at committee which should be a full read-out speech
- we would not expect Ms Freeman to speak for any longer than 20 minutes and would do so only in exceptional circumstances
- Ms Freeman's preference is to speak after fellow MSPs or UK Government ministers
- as a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech, and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech
- Ms Freeman speaks at about 130 words a minute. Remember to reduce each speech by 20% to allow the Minister to add her own personal steer to the speech and/or to allow interventions for parliamentary debates
- speeches should be in Arial 18, double spaced and include page numbers at the top
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.



## Formal speeches lasting approximately 10-15 minutes

- where possible, announcements or good news stories should be included in the speech
- some interesting quotes could also be added where relevant to subject matter and/or audience
- anything particular to say/not to say
- try to make the speech lively and interesting and not just fact after fact
- allow enough time for Ms Freeman to put her own personal steer on the speech. For example, when preparing a 15 minute speech, reduce it by 20%
- ensure that podium/lectern (if being used) is provided at all times
- if there is a question and answer session, this should last no longer than five minutes

## Content

- welcome key people at the start
- include what the audience expect to hear from the Minister
- make sure that the speech is in plain English
- if possible, add announcements (large speeches, committee or debate appearances)
- make the speech audience appropriate. **This is vitally important.** For example, if Ms Freeman is speaking to an audience of school children, please do not provide a speech that is top heavy with policy information
- include interesting quotes (for large speeches)
- check if anyone in the audience is worthy of a mention
- check if any special mentions are required. For example, anyone retiring, receiving an OBE and so on
- think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up-to-date position possible by consulting with the press team where necessary
- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience and how they fit into the bigger picture while still keeping it interesting

## All speeches

Consider the audience - Ms Freeman likes to speak as a conversation unless formal.

## Questions

Ms Freeman is always happy to take questions after a speech, even if it hasn't been indicated on the programme. Please make every effort to determine if this is likely to happen and indicate on the briefing if there are any strong reasons why Ms Freeman should not take questions.

If questions are likely, please ensure that your briefing includes a note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to arise and relevant lines to take in a question and answer format.

## Engagement briefing

## Key points

Please ensure that you use Ms Freeman's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings. Page numbers should be included at the top right corners.

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Freeman notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Freeman can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Freeman or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

#### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting including engagement with officials, a note of that and progress since
- questions and answers
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

#### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

#### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Freeman is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

## **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Freeman takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- briefing for debates should always include an index and have page numbers, top right corner
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

### **After the event:**

- officials should draft a short note (action points/flagging up any sensitive issues) post meetings, summarising any action(s) to be taken and forward and submit to private office
- Ms Freeman likes to write to any organisations she has visited so please ensure we have letters for her consideration/sign off, as appropriate, no later than a week after the event

## **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- note on the key issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not

- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information.
- 

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, the Minister is keen that standard replies are used.

For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Freeman should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an e mail format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Freeman
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Freeman will already be aware of
- please do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - Routine** (over three days)
  - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - Immediate** (within 24 hours)

Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Freeman is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to constituency days, recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the lead Minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision should be submitted on a 1:2 basis

- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Formatting

- all submissions should be typed on the submissions template using Arial 12pt
- recommendations and/or conclusions should be in **bold**
- accurately mark any annexes (A,B,C and so on) and give them appropriate titles
- where possible, the covering minute should be no longer than one page, clearly outlining the key points and decisions required from Ms Freeman
- **do not** include PQs, letters, press releases or embedded files within submissions

## Further considerations on priority marking

- the timing section is essential to both Ms Freeman and to private office. In addition to the priority marking, a deadline date should also be clearly stated. Please note that no other dates (for example, final publication date) should be included
- please leave out statements such as, 'a quick response will allow x'. Only use the priority markings outlined above
- during times when there is a high volume of work and/or demands, it may take Ms Freeman longer than the advised timings to come back with comments/clearance

## Correspondence

### Key points

- please follow Ms Freeman's preferences for correspondence. We would advise all officials to check the MACCS system for scans of previous signed letters in order to provide draft letters which meet Ms Freeman's preferences. Those letters which do not meet the ministerial preferences will be rejected back for re-draft

## Co-ordinated responses

- many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Please ensure that all facts and figures given in responses are consistent
- where a letter touches on more than one policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials. This guarantees that we are presenting a fully informed, unified picture of the government and ensures that the answer provided by Ms Freeman is as robust as possible

## Deadlines

- make every effort to ensure that **all** MACCS cases are sent to private office within the set timescales. Although a private office deadline is provided, it only gives Ms Freeman three days to sign off a case. Please ensure cases reach Ms Freeman as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and any necessary changes
- if the MACCS case is not sent to private office within the deadline, include a short note explaining the delay

- a response going out more than six weeks since the original letter was written must include an apology for the delay in replying

### **Diary replies**

- unless a response is very long and/or highly detailed, all diary cases should be signed by REDACTED, Private Secretary. This includes letters from MSPs, MPs, MEPs and councillors
- when drafting an acceptance letter, use the diary reply template which includes the sentence asking the correspondent to 'please contact the Minister's private office, at MinisterSocSec@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements'
- all diary cases should have an accept and decline letter unless advised differently
- always include a fully completed PS minute, including advice from communications if the event involves a press element. Only use the correct template
- if you have received a recommendation from private office regarding a diary case, you **must** ensure that this is included on the PS minute. Do not assume that private office will remember the case history
- do not use specific diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation. State that Ms Freeman is unable to accept the invitation due to a fully committed diary. Offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event

### **First Minister**

- correspondence to the First Minister must be dealt with as a matter of urgency
- always use the First Minister's Constituency address - 627 Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow, G41 2QG - and never her parliamentary address

### **Font**

- the main body of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12, single spaced and left aligned

### **Non-MACCS cases**

- ensure that the original correspondence is included with the reply letter for all cases prepared off MACCS which are emailed directly to the Minister's inbox

### **Official replies**

- please include 'Thank you for your letter of dd month to Jeane Freeman MSP, Minister for Social Security, regarding x I have been asked to respond' or similar

### **Redrafting**

- if a case is sent back for redrafting, amendments need to be made urgently and the case returned to us as quickly as possible so that it can be issued on time
- if unsure why a letter needs to be redrafted, please check the case history in the first instance

### **Spelling and grammar**

- proof read the response and use the spell checker before issuing it

### **Titles**

- please include the full title of the correspondent, for example Director, Chair, Convener
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included

- never use Mrs/Miss unless the correspondent does

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Private Secretary  
Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Other members of the Portfolio Team

All submissions and emails sent to private office should automatically be copied to the Comms CSSE mailbox (the mailbox is not constantly monitored so should not be used in isolation). Where you have been liaising with a particular comms officer, they should also be copied in.

Comms colleagues are best placed to offer advice on presentational issues and should be consulted in advance of any submission or proposed engagement coming forward. Contact communications on REDACTED

### **Special adviser**

Jeanette Campbell is the Special Adviser for the CSSE Portfolio and should be consulted in advance on significant policy submissions before coming to private office. Like comms, Jeanette should be copied in to all communications to Ms Freeman.

## **Fiona Hyslop - Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs**

1. Fiona Hyslop - top tips
2. Fiona Hyslop - speeches
3. Fiona Hyslop - engagement briefing
4. Fiona Hyslop - Parliamentary Questions
5. Fiona Hyslop - submissions
6. Fiona Hyslop - correspondence
7. Fiona Hyslop – contacts

### **Fiona Hyslop - top tips**

Fiona Hyslop MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

- Ms Hyslop's box closes at 4pm Monday to Friday
- during recess periods the box times are subject to change - you will be notified in advance of any changes
- briefings and speaking notes for should be submitted to private office **one week** in advance of the event, unless a specific date has been given
- speeches - please check the setup of the speech (lectern/no lectern, standing/sitting) as Ms Hyslop prefers the document to be formatted to suit the specific circumstances – see speech preferences for details

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

Briefings and speaking notes for Ms Hyslop should be submitted to private office one week in advance of the event, unless a specific date has been given.

These deadlines are there to ensure that Ms Hyslop can consider briefings or speaking notes ahead of events and request further information she may require in advance. This cuts down on the last minute requests for information which we have to make.

It is imperative to liaise with comms colleagues in advance of any event - contact them as soon as you receive the invite.

The choreography at events is important - when will Ms Hyslop be speaking, is there a lectern, when is she free to leave, and so on.

Please bear in mind the following is taken into consideration when compiling the briefing pack:

#### **Formal speeches (for example a launch, debate, conference or announcement)**

Ms Hyslop requires a phone call in advance of the speech being written to allow her to feed her thoughts and ideas in to the speech. Officials should liaise with her diary secretary to arrange this. Skeleton briefing and suggested points for inclusion in the speech should be provided ahead of this call.

#### **Informal speeches (for example short, informal or Cabinet speaking notes)**



Ms Hyslop prefers a short speaking note of bullet points (one page max) with headings used to signpost the contents. Use full sentences, not abbreviated, so that they can be read out loud verbatim as necessary.

Please use the briefing template and aide memoire for speeches. These provide Ms Hyslop and her private office with key information for any event.

Ms Hyslop speaks at approximately 150 words per minute and approximately 10% of her speaking time should be left free to allow her to take interventions/add anecdotes.

Ms Hyslop has commented on the importance of officials reading aloud the speech before sending to private office.

### **Format**

- **if there is a lectern**, use Arial Font 16, 1.5 line spacing. Page breaks should occur only at the end of a full sentence, but a paragraph can traverse two pages. Pages should be numbered on the top right of the page. Please include a word count at the end of each speech and approximate timings of delivery. Where there is a subject change, an appropriate heading should be inserted before the paragraph begins to act as signpost for the speech
- **if there is no lectern (sitting)**, use Arial Font 14, single line spacing. Add the word count and speaking time into the footer along with the page number
- **if there is no lectern (standing)**, use Arial Font 12, single line spacing. Add the word count and speaking time into the footer along with the page number
- **for chamber/committee**, use Arial Font 14, single line spacing
- **for the aide memoire**, use Arial Font 12, single line spacing

### **Engagement briefing**

Briefings and speaking notes for Ms Hyslop should be with private office one week in advance of the event, unless a specific date has been given.

These deadlines are there to ensure that Ms Hyslop can consider briefings or speaking notes ahead of events and request further information she may require in advance. This cuts down on the last minute requests for information which we have to make.

It is imperative that you liaise with comms colleagues in advance of any event - contact them as soon as you receive the invite.

The choreography at events is important - when will Ms Hyslop be speaking, is there a lectern, when is she free to leave, and so on.

Please ensure that the following is taken into consideration when compiling the briefing pack:

- if there are any changes to be made throughout a submitted briefing, email a full clean version again. If there are only small changes, only send the relevant pages. Always indicate in the covering email what changes have been made to which sections
- do not embed documents within the briefing as they may be missed when papers are being printed

- contact the organiser/visitor to obtain an agenda, details of what they wish to discuss, and the format of their conference etc. as early as possible. If anything is unclear, or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, contact the Private Secretary. You should find out, in particular, if Ms Hyslop will be expected to take questions after a speech
- Comms CEEA should be consulted on lines to take and the merits of a press release/other media possibilities for engagements before we see the briefing. This should be done as early as possible, especially for important policy or high profile events. Do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by comms
- for external visits, provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers since we need to inform the local MSP/MP when Ms Hyslop will be visiting their constituency. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- advise which officials will be accompanying Ms Hyslop and provide their mobile number (make sure it is switched on). Her Private Secretary will call when they are 10 minutes away from the venue. Officials should introduce Ms Hyslop to key/relevant attendees, brief Ms Hyslop if the need arises, and note any follow-up action
- speeches should **always** be Annex A of the briefing pack. **No bullet points**
- include a list of who Ms Hyslop will meet at the engagement, what position they hold and their biographies. If possible, also advise on who Ms Hyslop should try to speak to
- if organising a day of events, provide contact details and a postcode for each component of the day. Please also provide the briefing for each individual part of the day as separate briefing packs. We will require an outline for the day and a media plan in advance
- plaques for Ms Hyslop should read 'Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs'
- if an event is black tie or anything other than lounge suit, please make private office aware as soon as you know
- Ms Hyslop likes to have a policy official in attendance at events/engagements

## Parliamentary Questions

Answers to questions should be as helpful as possible, ensuring the government's position is accurately reflected. Key pointers to keep in mind when drafting answers to questions are:

- answers should be clear and concise
- oral answers should be no more than four or five lines long
- complex quotes, tables and acronyms and text in italics should not be used in oral answers
- details of previous questions raised should be included in background note
- if a similar question has been answered recently, you can cross refer to that PQ answer. This only applies to written questions as Ms Hyslop cannot stand up in the chamber and refer to a previous answer that is not immediately available to the member. A fully written response should always be provided for Oral Questions. Where cross referring a written answer to another written answer, or a previously answered oral answer, the wording should be 'I refer the member to the answer given to question XXX-question reference, answered on XXX date'. The question

being referred to and its background note should be included in the background note of the question being answered

- Q and A for orals should be set out across the full width of the page, with the answer directly below question rather than the traditional Q and A column format
- if drafting an oral answer for a question that has been raised in the portfolio themed week, the official drafting the answer should make themselves available (or find a suitable substitute and notify private office). They should attend the pre-brief which normally takes place on a Tuesday or Wednesday morning
- contact details for the lead official should always be provided in the background note of an oral question
- on the day of questions, officials should be contactable just in case Ms Hyslop has any last minute queries. Officials should also watch questions in case there is any follow up action required

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions should have a clear **purpose**, **conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Hyslop should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Hyslop
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Hyslop will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - **Routine** (over three days),
  - **Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - **Immediate** (within 24 hours)
- include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Hyslop is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

Below is a note of the Cabinet Secretary's preferences for correspondence and diary cases arranged in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p><b>MSPs</b> - use the reply address provided on the original letter, this is <b>not</b> always the parliament. MACCS will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address, so please <b>always</b> check this</p> <p><b>Constituents</b> - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please refer to the constituent by their full name and state their full address including postcode if given. Anyone who sends their request by email rather than by Royal Mail should receive their response by email. Please complete the name and address section of the reply as normal but underneath please put: 'By email to: XXX correspondent email address XXX'</p>
<b>Contact details</b>	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary, REDACTED on REDACTED, to discuss arrangements
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent</li> <li>• avoid general interest details, which do not answer the question asked</li> <li>• always include a PS minute</li> </ul>
<b>Co-ordinated responses Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases etc. Please ensure that all the facts and figures are consistent and up-to-date</li> <li>• refer to the date of the original letter in the response</li> </ul>
<b>Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the response is more than six weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying</li> <li>• if the MACCS case is not sent up within the private office deadline, include a short note explaining the delay. If this is not completed we will ask you for this before the letter will be put to Ms Hyslop for signature</li> </ul>
<b>Font</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12</li> </ul>
<b>Invitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phone REDACTED for a private office view of the Cabinet Secretary's availability to attend events to get an early steer</li> <li>• both accept and decline letters should be provided for all diary cases unless you are advised otherwise by private office</li> <li>• always include a completed PS minute along with official advice and communications team input if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits). If you think there is no value to Ms Hyslop's attendance, do not be afraid to recommend 'Decline'</li> <li>• do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that Ms Hyslop is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event</li> <li>• when drafting an acceptance letter for an event on a parliamentary day, please add the caveat '...delighted to attend subject to parliamentary business.'</li> </ul>

<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider who will be reading the response, for example young people</li> <li>• ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood</li> <li>• keep sentences short and avoid jargon</li> <li>• where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response</li> </ul>
<b>Layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so</li> <li>• do not alter the default page setup. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the ministerial template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word</li> <li>• leave seven lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow Ms Hyslop to write the greeting and signature</li> <li>• if, due to the above formatting, Ms Hyslop's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page</li> <li>• ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft</li> </ul>
<b>Ministerial Replies</b>	<p>Ms Hyslop wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSPs</li> <li>• MPs</li> <li>• MEPs</li> <li>• Members of the House of Lords</li> <li>• elected council members</li> <li>• chairman of fringe bodies</li> <li>• friends/acquaintances/constituents</li> <li>• parliamentary candidates</li> <li>• key stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>The Private Secretary should sign all other correspondence. If in doubt please contact REDACTED in private office on REDACTED</p>
<b>Official Replies</b>	<p>Please include "I have been asked by Ms Hyslop to thank you for your letter of dd/month and to reply on her behalf" or a similar form of words</p>
<b>Reallocation</b>	<p>Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Ms Hyslop is answering on behalf of the cabinet secretary who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original cabinet secretary/minister and simply include the words, "I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio"</p>

## **Signature**

Letters for the Cabinet Secretary's signature should be bold and capitals: FIONA HYSLOP  
Letters for PS/Ms Hyslop's signature:  
REDACTED  
Private Secretary

## **Spelling and grammar**

We recommend that you use both the spell check and grammar check in Word (press F7)

## **Timing**

Although a private office deadline is provided, it only gives Ms Hyslop three days to sign off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Cabinet Secretary as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and changes as necessary

## **Titles**

- include the full title of the correspondent: Director/Chairman/Convener (please note that Ms Hyslop uses the Scottish spelling of Convener – 'Convenor')
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included
- do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED Private Secretary REDACTED

REDACTED Deputy Private Secretary REDACTED

REDACTED Assistant Private Secretary (Diary) REDACTED

REDACTED Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence) REDACTED

## **Dr Alasdair Allan - Minister for International Development and Europe**

1. Dr Alasdair Allan - top tips
2. Dr Alasdair Allan - speeches
3. Dr Alasdair Allan - engagement briefing
4. Dr Alasdair Allan - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Dr Alasdair Allan - submissions
6. Dr Alasdair Allan – contact

### **Dr Alasdair Allan - top tips**

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP is the Minister for International Development and Europe. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

Dr Allan's weekly working pattern is usually:

- Monday - constituency (based in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis)
- Tuesday - flight from Stornoway to mainland and on to parliament. Engagements/meetings possible from late morning onwards
- Wednesday - parliament (mornings available for engagements/meetings, afternoon engagements/meetings subject to parliamentary business)
- Thursday - parliament (mornings available for engagements/meetings, afternoon engagements/meetings subject to parliamentary business)
- Friday - constituency (based in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis)
- Please note that given both Monday and Friday are constituency days, and coupled with the location in the Western Isles, it is unlikely Dr Allan will accept engagements in his ministerial capacity on those days.

When you call the office to enquire about Dr Allan's availability, we can suggest dates, but we will generally not reserve time in the diary.

### **The ministerial box**

The closing time for getting papers to Dr Allan is generally 4pm Tuesday to Thursday. Papers submitted on a Thursday will not be cleared until the following Tuesday, so please bear this in mind if you need to provide urgent or immediate advice.

There will be no ministerial box issued over the weekend due to logistical issues within the constituency.

If you have something urgent that has to go in Dr Allan's box but might not make the deadline, please give us a call and we can see what arrangements can be made. We will always try to be as flexible as possible to suit both the Minister and the official's working schedule.

### **Ministerial engagements: briefing, speeches, meetings, events**

Briefing and speeches should be emailed to private office at least one week before the event or meeting is due to take place. Should this not be possible, please speak to private office – we will try to be as accommodating as possible.

For keynote speeches, debate or committee appearance, you should also liaise with private office to arrange a pre-brief between Dr Allan and officials, a few days prior to the event.

Meetings will generally take place in parliament Tuesday to Thursday. Please ensure that as a supporting official, you arrive at least fifteen minutes before the meeting is due to start, so that the Minister has time to discuss any issues ahead of the meeting.

If a meeting involves an international delegation, please ensure that you follow the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government protocol in relation to VIP visitors. You should also ensure that, where available, you provide the relevant country 'badge' for Dr Allan to wear.

Dr Allan generally likes official support at meetings, events and for parliamentary business.

## **Speeches**

### **Key points**

- for major set-piece events (for example an announcement, conference, debate or launch) Dr Allan expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. For a 5-10 minute speaking slot, bullets are preferable, which can be used as an aide memoire with key facts, figures, names and places
- draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Dr Allan to consider and provide feedback. Private office may also arrange a discussion between officials and Dr Allan to go over the content of a speech
- as a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech. A word count should be included at the end
- Dr Allan speaks at about 150 words a minute
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- page breaks should occur only at the end of a full sentence, with no split paragraph between pages (therefore providing a natural pause between changing pages)
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken
- Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.
- **Top tips on writing a speech for Dr Allan**
- **Active not passive**
- Dr Allan has asked that speeches are written in active and not passive format

### **Know the audience**

- what do they expect to hear from Dr Allan?
- how long will they expect him to speak for?
- is the speech appropriate to the audience, for example school children?
- who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- consult widely to improve relevance



- think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up-to-date position possible on these (consulting with the communications team where necessary)
- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience and where they fit into the bigger picture

### **Keep it interesting**

- don't go into huge detail on the mechanics of the implementation of policy - ensure that the high level picture is clear
- don't use technocratic language - keep it simple
- don't agonise over making the speech funny - Dr Allan will add anecdotes, jokes as appropriate, but any suggestions are very welcome
- it is usually best to forward the speech to Dr Allan as early as possible. Dr Allan will then amend it himself to final form, if appropriate, checking that officials are content with the content of the final speech

### **Engagement briefing**

- ensure that you use Dr Allan's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure where appropriate that there is parking for the government car
- ensure any official attending an event with Dr Allan notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has the phone switched on and on loud. This means that we or Dr Allan can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Dr Allan or private office think the briefing is too long, it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office. Officials attend to brief Dr Allan, if the need arises, and to return and feed back to the directorate
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet, which should be followed by:
- agenda/running order, which should be followed by:
- a **summary page** covering suggested lines to hold on each agenda item or topic that might be raised, relevant facts, figures, current issues and any possible issues to

avoid. **And/or** meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)

- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- country profiles
- speaking note - if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages
- where Dr Allan is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Dr Allan is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Dr Allan takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

### **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should:

- be short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- the background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues

- include around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Whilst written answers can of course be longer than oral PQs, these should **not** be four or five pages long.

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Dr Allan is keen that standard replies are used.

For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose**, **conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Dr Allan should be able to quickly identify what he is required to consider
- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Dr Allan
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Dr Allan will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered

- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Dr Allan is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Contacts

### Private office

MinisterIDE@gov.scot

REDACTED

Private Secretary

REDACTED

REDACTED

Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED

### Communications

For any engagement that Dr Allan attends, early consideration should be given to the publicity requirements and photo opportunities. Close relations with the Communications Europe and Culture Team is essential so please ensure that they are copied into all relevant submissions and material:

CommunicationsCTEA@gov.scot

Our communications team are:

- REDACTED
- REDACTED
- REDACTED
- REDACTED

### Special advisers

Special advisers should also be copied into all submissions and briefing, particularly when sensitive/media issues are involved.

Dr Allan's Special Adviser is Katy Bowman.

## **Keith Brown - Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work**

1. Keith Brown - top tips
2. Keith Brown - speeches
3. Keith Brown - engagement briefing
4. Keith Brown - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Keith Brown - submissions
6. Keith Brown - correspondence
7. Keith Brown - contacts

### **Keith Brown - top tips**

Keith Brown MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work. You can find biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

- Mr Brown speaks at 130 words per minute. He likes to personalise speeches so please factor in time to allow him to do so (suggest cutting by around 20% for this)
- Mr Brown requires official support at all external events/meetings. It is the official's responsibility to take forward any actions from these engagements
- email briefing and speeches to the ministerial box five working days in advance of a meeting or event. Speeches should be attached as separate documents, **not** as part of an overall briefing pack
- try to keep submissions and briefing packs as short, sharp and punchy as is possible
- submissions should clearly indicate whether they are routine, immediate or urgent. Mr Brown also receives a weekly note from each directorate. This should be used for routine issues wherever possible
- if Mr Brown is being asked to turn something around very quickly, make sure you explain the urgency and why he is being given so little time. Give private office a call if there are reasons best explained over the phone
- all emails should be sent to the CabSecEJFW@gov.scot inbox, rather than to any personal email address of the private office team. We receive a lot of emails every day, so can't respond to everyone immediately. It really helps us if urgent emails are marked as such in the subject heading
- the box closes Monday to Thursday at 4pm, on Friday there is no box generally (call private office to discuss immediate items). However, papers submitted on any particular day may not be considered by Mr Brown that day so please factor in as much time as possible
- Mr Brown lives in Dollar and is in his constituency both on Mondays and Fridays

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

- for major set-piece events Mr Brown expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. For a 5-10 minute speaking slot, bullets are preferable
- draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Mr Brown to consider and provide feedback
- where possible, announcements or positive news stories should be included in the speech

- try to make the speech engaging and interesting and think about the audience and nature of the event. An after dinner slot will need a different tone to a keynote policy speech at a conference for example
- try to ensure the speech flows and doesn't sound like it's been stitched together from contributions from across the SG (though that may be true)
- avoid using acronyms and jargon and remember this is being spoken, so have a practice reading it out yourself – if you find it awkward or jarring then Mr Brown is likely to as well
- Mr Brown speaks at 130 words per minute. Allow enough time for him to put his own personal steer on the speech. For example, when preparing a 15 minute speech, reduce it by 20% - this is very important otherwise Mr Brown will overrun
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with double spacing
- paragraphs no longer than two or three lines and sentences should not cross over pages
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered

### **Speech content**

- welcome/thank key people at the start
- Mr Brown likes facts and figures (including funding details) so include those – but make sure they are accurate and up to date (and positive obviously)
- make the speech audience appropriate. This is vitally important. For example, if Mr Brown is speaking to an audience of young people, do not provide something that is top heavy with policy information that they might not understand
- include appropriate and interesting quotes or facts (for example, is there anything of note about the venue, location, organisation, other speakers, audience and so on)
- check if anyone in the audience is worthy of a specific mention. For example, anyone retiring, anyone receiving an OBE
- be appropriately empathetic to demonstrate we understand the issues facing the audience and how they fit into the bigger picture while still keeping it interesting
- if possible, include an announcement
- would a joke or two be appropriate? If so, add them in

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

- ensure that you use Mr Brown's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr Brown or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing

- always include a good summary page as part of the pack with top lines, key issues and anything to avoid. Think of it as being a one-pager that Mr Brown could use on its own to get through a meeting
- try to make the pack (particularly larger packs) as easy to navigate as possible – a 50 page pack with no clear contents page or page numbers will be nigh on impossible to use
- always include a contents page and pages numbers (in the bottom right hand corner)
- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Brown to do, or discuss, and the format of their event as early as possible. If anything is unclear, or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office
- specifically, you should find out if Mr Brown will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after his speech. If he will, inform private office immediately
- speaking notes should always be submitted as a separate document (and contains page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting

#### **At an event**

- ensure any official attending an event with Mr Brown notes their mobile number in the briefing and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Mr Brown can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- be prepared to brief Mr Brown on arrival if the need arises and to take any feedback to the directorate
- you should also make yourself known immediately to Mr Brown and/or Private Secretary to facilitate his arrival and introduce him to key individuals at the meeting or event. Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when Mr Brown arrives

#### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- summary page
- agenda - the briefing should provide a clear timeline for the engagement
- steering brief (if Mr Brown is chairing)
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

## **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10 pages

## **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Mr Brown is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of
- good summary page

## **Parliamentary engagements**

Mr Brown takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

## **For committee appearances**

The briefing should include:

- a list of committee members
- any particular interest in relevant issues by committee members
- a list of relevant organisations from whom the committee have recently taken evidence from, and any particular issues explored by the committee
- a summary of recent PQs/debates/statements on the issue
- key facts and statistics
- recent media attention on the issues, and the Scottish Government response
- stakeholder views
- financial issues
- supporting officials (please discuss in advance with private office)
- full question and answer

Documents to include in the briefing pack:

- the committee's agenda and corresponding papers
- any relevant correspondence with the committee
- copies of the Official Report for relevant committee meetings, debates and statements

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.



## Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

### Oral questions – Topical, General and Portfolio Questions

Answers should:

- be short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

### Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Brown is keen that standard replies are used. For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions. There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

### Submissions

#### Key points

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Mr Brown should be able to quickly identify what he is required to consider
- try to keep the submission as short as possible – most should be able to be three pages or less

- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Mr Brown
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Mr Brown will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Mr Brown is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- where **Immediate**, please explain the urgency in the submission - we will just ask otherwise
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, communications officers and special advisers are copied - ideally communications and special advisers should be consulted in advance
- include clear recommendations and/or conclusions – these should always be in bold
- **consider if the weekly note can be used for routine issues**

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Key points

- think about the correspondent when drafting the response – sounds obvious but a response to an opposition spokesperson on a key policy will have a different tone than a letter concerning an issue a member's constituent might have
- when drafting an acceptance letter include the sentence asking the correspondent to 'please contact the Cabinet Secretary's office at CabSecEJFW@gov.scot or on 0131 REDACTED to make the necessary arrangements'
- responses to diary invitations should be sent out in the name of Mr Brown's Private Secretary – REDACTED
- leave a space between the reference number(s) and the date, and tab the date in once. Also, leave four lines between the date and the first line and four lines between the final greeting and the Cabinet Secretary's name at the bottom. This will allow sufficient room for Mr Brown to add in a greeting and to sign the letter

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (MACCS and PQs)	REDACTED

### **Special adviser**

Stewart Maxwell, REDACTED

### **Communications Economy**

REDACTED, REDACTED

## **Paul Wheelhouse - Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy**

1. Paul Wheelhouse - top tips
2. Paul Wheelhouse - speeches
3. Paul Wheelhouse - engagement briefing
4. Paul Wheelhouse - correspondence
5. Paul Wheelhouse - contacts

### **Paul Wheelhouse - top tips**

Paul Wheelhouse is the Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box closures**

Mr Wheelhouse receives a box on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The deadline is 3pm, but this is sometimes complicated by the fact that he (and we) travel a lot. Please phone private office, in advance if possible, if something is coming up that he needs to see urgently. It's really helpful to us if you can indicate any deadlines for clearance when you send briefing up so that we can prioritise.

### **Speeches**

- think carefully about the audience (for example, age) and avoid jargon with non-technical audiences
- speeches should normally be 10-15 minutes in length
- Mr Wheelhouse speaks at around 160 words per minute
- use Arial font size 16pt with 1.5 line spacing
- paragraphs no longer than two or three lines (to allow Mr Wheelhouse to take a breath)
- page breaks should be at the end of a sentence
- number the pages
- for debates in the chamber, it's helpful to have word counts for each section (particularly for closing speeches so that Mr Wheelhouse can calculate how much he can add in)
- for major speeches, send an outline two weeks before and arrange a pre-brief
- in general, Mr Wheelhouse prefers his speeches written out in full but for informal events bullet points are better
- involve communications colleagues and special advisers in drafting

### **Engagement briefing**

- use the briefing template provided
- email briefing and speeches five working days in advance of an event
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. Check details carefully and with the organisers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- provide a full delegate list for events

- request for a lectern for Mr Wheelhouse at the venue
- number pages and don't embed documents in Word documents (they get missed when printed)
- include mobile numbers of supporting officials in the briefing
- for full day visits to multiple sites, send an outline two weeks before with details of attendees and discuss the need for a pre-brief with private office

## Correspondence

- we check the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS) regularly for draft responses sent for clearance, so there is no need to phone or email to alert us to these
- use plain English
- responses should be as helpful as possible (as for Parliamentary Questions). Always address the question(s) or issue(s) raised by the correspondent directly. Ideally, letters should begin along the lines of 'I think the key points you raise are x and x and I will address them in turn...'
- correspondence relating to issues such as job losses should be as empathetic as possible, for example 'I am very disappointed...'
- where appropriate, when declining diary cases, leave the possibility of a future meeting open
- when referring to the Scottish or UK Government, state clearly each time which you mean, not just 'Government'
- use Mr Wheelhouse's full title
- dates should follow the Scottish Government convention (for example, 15 May 2016, not 15<sup>th</sup> May)
- remove unnecessary parts of the letter template (for example, unused refs, 'signature' etc). Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put Mr Wheelhouse's name in the signature space. Letters should be ready to print and not need further editing by private office
- leave four lines between the date and the start of the letter for the 'Dear x' to be handwritten, and eight lines between the end of the letter and Mr Wheelhouse's name for the signature
- always proof read
- when considering diary cases, bear in mind that Mr Wheelhouse uses Mondays and Fridays for constituency work. Don't hesitate to call to discuss

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED  
REDACTED

Private Secretary  
Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED  
REDACTED

### Special advisers

Contact REDACTED on REDACTED for Business and Innovation  
Contact REDACTED on REDACTED for Energy

## **Jamie Hepburn - Minister for Employability and Training**

1. Jamie Hepburn - top tips
2. Jamie Hepburn - speeches
3. Jamie Hepburn - engagement briefing
4. Jamie Hepburn - Parliamentary Questions
5. Jamie Hepburn - submissions
6. Jamie Hepburn - correspondence
7. Jamie Hepburn - contacts

### **Jamie Hepburn - top tips**

Jamie Hepburn MSP is the Minister for Employability and Training. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website, where you can also download images of the Minister.

- Mr Hepburn speaks at 130 words per minute. He likes to add some personal touches to his speeches so please factor in time to allow him to do so (suggest cutting by around 10% for this)
- Mr Hepburn requires official support at all external events and meetings. It is an official's responsibility to take forward any actions from these engagements
- email briefing and speeches to the ministerial box five working days in advance of a meeting or event. Speeches should be attached as separate documents, not as part of an overall briefing pack
- try to keep submissions and briefing packs as short and concise as possible
- submissions should clearly indicate whether they are routine, immediate or urgent, and should always include a conclusion and, if appropriate, recommendations
- if Mr Hepburn is being asked to turn something around very quickly, please make sure you explain the urgency and why he is being given so little time. Give the private office a call if there are reasons best explained over the phone
- all emails should be sent to the MinisterET@gov.scot inbox, rather than to any personal email address of the private office team. We receive a lot of emails every day, so can't respond to everyone immediately. It really helps us if urgent emails are marked as such in the subject heading and preceded or followed up by a phone call to private office
- the box closes Monday to Thursday at 3pm and on Friday there is no box (call private office to discuss immediate items). However, papers submitted on any particular day may not be considered by Mr Hepburn that day so please factor in as much time as possible
- Mr Hepburn lives in Cumbernauld, and is in his constituency on both Mondays and Fridays. Mr Hepburn likes to protect his constituency time – worth bearing in mind when considering possible engagements/meetings on those days
- remember the little things make a big difference – taking time to focus on formatting, spelling and grammar can help you, the private office and Mr Hepburn

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

- Mr Hepburn's key ask is that speeches follow a structure, flow well and have natural bridges between sections

- for all events, Mr Hepburn expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. This includes shorter speeches (5-10 minutes), but you should of course tailor content and length to the type of event
- send draft speeches for significant events to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Mr Hepburn to consider and provide feedback
- consider sending an outline speech structure two or three weeks in advance – this allows early input from Mr Hepburn and could ultimately save any unnecessary work in the long run
- include announcements or positive news stories in the speech where possible
- try to make the speech engaging and interesting and think about the audience and nature of the event. An after dinner slot will need a different tone to a keynote policy speech at a conference, for example
- try to ensure the speech flows and doesn't sound like it's been stitched together from contributions from across the Scottish Government (though that may be true)
- avoid using acronyms and jargon and remember it is being spoken, so have a practice reading it out yourself – if you find it awkward or jarring then Mr Hepburn is likely to as well
- Mr Hepburn speaks at 130 words per minute. Allow enough time for him to put his own personal steer on the speech. For example, when preparing a 15 minute speech, reduce it by 10%. You should also consider Mr Hepburn's delivery style – he doesn't deliver a speech like he would read aloud a book – he likes to add natural pauses. So consider that, alongside personal additions, to ensure Mr Hepburn doesn't overrun his slot
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 line spacing
- paragraphs no longer than two lines and sentences should not cross over pages
- if there are particularly important points to make then Mr Hepburn likes to use repetition (for example – "together we must..., together we should..., together we will...")
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack – and pages should always be numbered

## Speech content

- this is the crucial starting point for any speech, so spend time thinking about what should be included and where within the speech
- always start with the niceties and welcome/thank key people at the start
- check if anyone in the audience is worth a mention, for example is anyone retiring, receiving an OBE, received an award recently
- try early on in the speech to link it to the event/history of the host organisation/quirky fact about the venue
- it is vital to make the speech audience appropriate. For example, if Mr Hepburn is speaking to an audience of young people, then do not provide something that is filled with detailed policy information that they might not understand or enjoy
- it's worth taking a few moments in the speech to outline what Mr Hepburn is going to cover – this is more appropriate for longer set-piece policy speeches. For shorter addresses, you can cover this off by simply referencing what the event is about (and then getting your quirky fact in, as per bullet point above)
- where possible, link the speech to a policy announcement
- try to focus the speech on four or five key policy areas – just because Mr Hepburn has 10 minutes to speak, don't make it a policy dump. Each policy topic should always relate back to the nature/purpose of the event

- Mr Hepburn likes positive facts and figures (including funding details) so include those – but make sure they are accurate and up to date
- if facts/figures represent a need for improvement then state that clearly in the speech (for example, "these figures represent progress, but we must go further. We will do that by...")
- be appropriately empathetic to demonstrate we understand the issues facing the audience and how they fit into the bigger picture and thank them for their hard work
- talk about the challenges faced more generally in the particular sector, but always draw them back and link to opportunities
- Mr Hepburn likes the use of repetition of key points/phrases/priorities. For example, if you're talking about the need for a partnership approach to take hold of opportunities (and you should try and talk about this in speeches), then it's worth concluding that particular section/speech with: "together, we can..., together we should..., together we will..."
- would a joke or two be appropriate? If so, add them in
- always bring the speech to a concise conclusion that sums up the key points and reiterates the messages of thanks for the work the organisation/audience do

There is no doubt that drafting a speech is challenging – and fun at the same time – so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice. Get in touch with private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected and pointers on flow and content.

Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

Finally, always always read the speech aloud – this is when you pick up the stumbling points or identify areas that don't bridge.

engagement briefing

## **Key points**

- use Mr Hepburn's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers of both the host and the supporting official. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr Hepburn or private office think the briefing is too long, it will likely be returned for editing. If we think more material is required then we'll let you know
- always include a good summary page as part of the pack with top lines, key issues and anything to avoid. Think of it as being a one-pager that Mr Hepburn could use on its own to get through a meeting. Remember – this isn't verbatim lines to take - focus on key topics/issues and the SG/Minister's position
- try to make the pack (particularly larger packs) as easy to navigate as possible – a 50 page pack with no clear contents page or page numbers will be nigh on impossible to use
- always include a contents page and pages numbers (in the middle at the bottom of the page)
- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Hepburn to do, or discuss, and the format of their event as



early as possible. If anything is unclear, or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office

- put forward suggestions to make the visit as useful as possible and to make the logistics as easy as possible, for example a tour before an official opening helps to add context to a speech. Mr Hepburn likes to be hands-on and involved in practical areas of visits (for example, is he visiting a café to meet Modern Apprentices? Then he should be involved in making the tea behind the counter – it's a simple task, but looks great in the pictures and the stakeholders always appreciate the involvement)
- find out if Mr Hepburn will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after his speech. If he will, inform private office immediately
- speaking notes should always be submitted as a separate document (and contains page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office. If there is likely to be a challenge in providing support, then you should contact private office as soon as possible to discuss
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting

#### **At an event**

- arrive in ample time and make yourself familiar with the venue and bear in mind ministers often arrive early
- ensure any official attending an event with Mr Hepburn has a mobile which is switched on and the number is included in the briefing. This means that we or Mr Hepburn can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- work out the logistics – where Mr Hepburn will arrive, car parking, is there a lectern, where are the facilities?
- make yourself known to the main contact at the venue, so you in turn can introduce Mr Hepburn to them and ensure that you identify someone to lead the introductions
- Mr Hepburn doesn't always need an official on his shoulder – he is comfortable leading conversations, but stay close in case any questions arise and don't be afraid to contribute to discussions, if appropriate
- if Mr Hepburn is delivering a speech, check what is actually said against the draft you provided. It will give you a sense of how he articulates the key issues in your policy area, as well as more widely, and can help in any future speeches you draft
- take a note of any discussion that takes place. The private secretary may take brief notes of action points, but this will not constitute a formal note - this should be drafted by the supporting official

#### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- summary page

- agenda – the briefing should provide a clear timeline for the engagement and specify Mr Hepburn's role
- steering brief (if Mr Hepburn is chairing a meeting)
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format) – this should focus on agenda items or likely topics to be raised, it shouldn't be the whole directorate's policy priorities
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A – light touch and not verbatim answers
- biographies on meeting attendees (if Mr Hepburn has not previously met them)
- speaking note, if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above, but ideally no more than 10 pages
- include table plans and guest lists, including anyone in particular Mr Hepburn should meet/talk to

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- this should focus on the logistics – no more than six pages
- why Mr Hepburn is attending and the objectives of the visit
- when, where, what and who, guest list, biographies as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of
- good summary page – this is the summary of all the key topics likely to be raised
- a couple of FMQ-style briefs, if a conversation is likely to raise issues – this will most likely be read in advance, not on the day by Mr Hepburn

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Mr Hepburn takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

### **For committee appearances**

The briefing should cover:

- whether short opening remarks are appropriate – just one or two sides
- a list of committee members
- any particular interest in relevant issues by committee members

- a list of relevant organisations from whom the committee have recently taken evidence from, and any particular issues explored by the committee
- a summary of recent PQs/debates/statements on the issue
- key facts and statistics
- recent media attention on the issues, and the Scottish Government response
- stakeholders views
- financial issues
- supporting officials (please discuss in advance with private office)
- full Q and A

Documents to include in the briefing pack:

- the committee's agenda and corresponding papers
- any relevant correspondence with the committee
- copies of the Official Report for relevant committee meetings, debates, and statements

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

## **Parliamentary Questions**

### **Oral Questions – Topical, General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should:

- be short, succinct and to the point – ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the question being asked
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- have a background note which should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- include around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with their deputy director and special adviser in advance of submitting to private office – when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## **Written PQs**

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)

- be helpful in tone
- be relevant – no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information
- Mr Hepburn always wants to answer written PQs, therefore, no answer should ask for others to respond on his behalf, for example they should not say: 'I will ask the Chief Executive of SDS to write to the Member'. If there is a particular reason why Mr Hepburn can't answer the question directly, then you should contact private office immediately to discuss

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Hepburn is keen that standard replies are used. Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions. There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to Mr Hepburn should have a clear **purpose**, **conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Mr Hepburn should be able to quickly identify what he is required to consider
- try to keep the submission as short as possible – most should be three pages or less
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Mr Hepburn
- do not include background detail Mr Hepburn will already be aware of. If it has been some time since the Minister considered advice on the issue, or if it is new, then you should include a very succinct outline of the issue as an annex
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - Routine** (over three days)
  - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - Immediate** (within 24 hours)

Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Mr Hepburn is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- where **Immediate**, please explain the urgency in the submission – we will just ask otherwise
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis

- ensure that the submission is cleared by your deputy director and that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance
- include clear recommendations and/or conclusions – these should always be in bold
- Mr Hepburn likes to be kept abreast of policy developments, but also likes early notice of big/key decisions required at short notice. Consider calling private office in advance to give notice of important submissions/decisions to be made

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Key points

- please think about the correspondent when drafting the response – sounds obvious but a response to an opposition spokesperson on a key policy will have a different tone than a letter concerning an issue a member's constituent might have
- when drafting an acceptance letter, include the sentence asking the correspondent to "please contact REDACTED, in the Minister's office at MinisterET@gov.scot or on 0131 REDACTED to make the necessary arrangements"
- responses to diary invitations should be sent out in the name of Mr Hepburn's Private Secretary – REDACTED
- leave a space between the reference number(s) and the date, and tab the date in once
- leave four lines between the date and the first line, and four lines between the final greeting and the Minister's name at the bottom. This will allow sufficient room for Mr Hepburn to add in a greeting and sign the letter

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary	REDACTED

### Special advisers

John McFarlane	Economy and Jobs	41811
Jeanette Campbell	Fair Work and Employability	45190
Colin McAllister	Education and Skills	43248

## Communications

REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED

## Roseanna Cunningham - Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

1. Roseanna Cunningham - top tips
2. Roseanna Cunningham - speeches
3. Roseanna Cunningham - engagement briefing
4. Roseanna Cunningham - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Roseanna Cunningham - submissions
6. Roseanna Cunningham - correspondence
7. Roseanna Cunningham - contacts

### Roseanna Cunningham - top tips

Roseanna Cunningham MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

Ms Cunningham's private office is staffed by REDACTED (PS), REDACTED (DPS) and REDACTED (APS). REDACTED also assists with correspondence cases on Mondays and Tuesdays. While the team works flexibly with each individual covering a variety of tasks, generally questions about the diary and correspondence should be directed to Rachael.

Top tips for working with Ms Cunningham:

- Ms Cunningham turns submissions around quickly, but please don't assume that this means you can send something up at the last minute and get it cleared. Always check in with private office if you have a last minute item for her attention
- Ms Cunningham is content to work electronically, so our office doesn't have an official 'box close' time – however, we do generally prepare paper boxes for 4pm on parliament days
- Ms Cunningham prefers to take detailed briefing on new issues – for anything she is already familiar with, paperwork can be summarised and kept to a minimum
- if you are scheduling an event, make sure that if it goes over lunchtime there is actually time/facility for Ms Cunningham to eat
- we are often required to undertake outdoor events – please have a think about appropriate clothing/footwear for visits and events and **flag up in advance** if anything specific is required (for example boots, high visibility gear, waterproofs and so on). Remember your event is unlikely to be the only thing Ms Cunningham is doing on the day and she may need to change into business dress for later appointments – flagging up changing facilities and building time for a change into the programme is much appreciated

### Roseanna Cunningham - speeches

Ms Cunningham places great importance on the quality of her speeches and wants to ensure that they are both interesting and relevant to the audience. Ms Cunningham will always carry out work of her own on any speech she is giving. She will generally do this on her iPad and send it back to us in a format that she particularly wishes to use for that event. Below are private office's top tips for preparing a speech for the Cabinet Secretary.

## Key points

- draft speeches should generally be sent up two weeks in advance of the visit unless otherwise agreed with private office
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate Word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing. Otherwise, please keep formatting to a minimum as Ms Cunningham will convert the document for use on an iPad – formatting trickery often does not survive this process. Please don't use text boxes as these do not convert at all
- for speeches longer than five minutes, Ms Cunningham prefers verbatim text with minimal formatting (i.e. no bullets, no text boxes, headings marked bold only). For short speeches of less than five minutes, a list of bullet points is fine
- Ms Cunningham speaks at about 150 words a minute
- if time/word count is a concern (for example for a debate) then Ms Cunningham likes paragraphs that can easily be dropped (without affecting the flow of the speech) to be highlighted in yellow. She is very adept at doing this
- Ms Cunningham dislikes speeches that are obviously a cut and paste from other speeches - or have been designed by committee. Such speeches rarely flow properly
- think carefully about the audience that the speech is intended for. For example, if the audience will principally be young people then don't make it too heavy on policy
- make sure you know what the format of the event will be. Will the audience be standing or sitting? Will Ms Cunningham be making the speech from a lectern or from sitting at a table, or possibly from standing in the centre of a room without a lectern?
- think about what the speech is trying to achieve. Summarise that at the start, then work through the body of the speech with that clearly in mind, then conclude by summarising the key message(s) again. If you aren't clear about what the speech is trying to achieve then it could end up dull or inappropriate, or both
- avoid using clichés and lengthy phrases which can more easily be rendered as ('it is', 'I believe' and 'I think'). Ms Cunningham doesn't like using phrases such as 'at this moment in time' when you mean 'now' or 'right now'
- always read the speech out loud - that is the best way to pick up on things such as repetitive use of words, or failing to allow for a natural breathing space

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.

## Engagement briefing

### Key points

- ensure that you use Ms Cunningham's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- If you are providing urgent briefing which may require to be **emailed to the Cabinet Secretary**, please bear in mind that she works on an iPad and there are problems with Word formatting converting over – therefore please avoid the use of formatting (and in particular text boxes) and keep the text as plain and simple as possible
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google

maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service

- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Cunningham notes their mobile number in the briefing and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Cunningham can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- if the Cabinet Secretary is being asked to do Q and A as part of an event, **separate Q and A briefing should be provided** and clearly labelled as such. This can be added as an annex in the briefing pack
- Ms Cunningham prefers her briefing to be structured in a logical manner – she likes to have information about the group she is meeting and the purpose of the event before the agenda, biographies etc.
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Cunningham or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- please think carefully about the purpose of the briefing and how much time the Cabinet Secretary will be engaged for. For short engagements (half an hour or less), briefing should be no more than six sides of A4 (not including speech). Please also differentiate your briefing to **ensure it is appropriate** to the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Cunningham is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of



## **Media bids/interviews**

If the Cabinet Secretary has been asked to record a short clip (either radio or TV) for the media, any briefing supplied should be no more than two sides of A4. The briefing should cover:

- the top lines (at the top of the first page, set out in **bold text**), plus short, relevant background paragraphs
- highlight any key events which are relevant to the topic having taken place within the last few years (for example – if recording a clip about winter storm impacts, relevant flooding events should be mentioned)
- attach any recent news releases on the topic as Ms Cunningham often finds it useful to refer to these before recording.

For longer, more in-depth interviews (for example longer segments with BBC 'Out of Doors', or an interview on a specific subject with a newspaper/magazine journalist) a full briefing pack is usually required. Check with private office if unsure.

## **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Cunningham takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

## **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ

system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email

- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## **Written PQs**

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Cunningham is keen that standard replies are used.

For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs, if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## **Oral PQs**

Oral Questions can be Topical Questions (Tuesday 2-2.20pm), Portfolio Questions (Wednesday 2-2.40pm - 10 Questions in a six-weekly slot shared with Rural Economy and Connectivity Portfolio) or General Questions (Thursday 11.40am-midday).

The following points should all be considered when drafting an Oral PQ answer:

- it should be short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long
- address each concern in the question
- avoid complex quotes and tables
- intelligence - who is asking the question and why? What political party is asking the question? How might this affect the tone of the answer?
- what constituency does the MSP asking the question represent? Are you aware of any areas of concern in that area or in the surrounding constituencies? What supplementary questions might arise in connection with these issues?
- read the answer aloud to check that it flows
- be available in case last minute changes are required, or to answer a query from Ms Cunningham
- supplementary questions - give careful consideration to likely supplementaries when drafting Oral PQ's. It is often the most obvious questions that are missed

- Oral PQs should be looked at as a mini-debate, in which the Scottish Government always gets the last word. Always include at the front of the background note two or three key points that the Minister should get across - the key message
- the deadlines for portfolio and other oral questions are as set out by the DG office at the time of allocation

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Cunningham should be able to quickly identify what they are required to consider
- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Cunningham
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Cunningham will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Cunningham is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, Communications officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Key points

Ministerial correspondence is subject to corporate targets and should be answered within 20 working days. Draft replies for ministerial consideration should be with private office within 10 working days. Guidance for drafting correspondence and handling invitations is below and private office are more than happy to answer any queries you may have.  
 Preparing a response:

- ensure that all correspondence is proof read, accurate and spell-checked before you submit to private office. If it is not, it will be returned for correction
- responses should sound as helpful as possible and answer all questions raised
- open the letter with some background, for example: 'Thank you for your letter of x about...'
- avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question asked
- if the reply is late, please include an apology for the time it has taken to respond
- Ms Cunningham will personally respond to all letters from MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, Councillors, Chairpersons/Chief Executives of Public Bodies and key stakeholders, friends/acquaintances, and constituents (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire)
- Ms Cunningham prefers to personally address the recipient. Please leave seven spaces above and below the text body for the opening salutation and closing signature
- the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12
- insert the month and year only, not the actual date. If less than three working days until end of the month, date the response for the following month
- please include the correspondent's job title in the address bar
- letters should be signed: ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM
- many letters are related to PQs, press releases, previous correspondence and so on - make sure any facts and figures given are consistent and up-to-date
- anything cut and pasted from previous correspondence should be tailored to the current correspondent and information up-to-date
- if the correspondence was sent to another minister and passed to Ms Cunningham because it falls within her portfolio responsibilities, then reference this in the opening paragraph
- when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given
- please do not embed letters in submissions/briefing – please always send them as separate documents
- aim for consistency in replies as far as possible – if we receive correspondence on a particular issue from a range of correspondents (for example public, MSPs, MPs, stakeholders), unless there is a good reason to provide varying information, replies should be consistent with one another
- Preparing a response for a MACCS diary case or invitation dealt out with MACCS:
- all diary cases should be drafted for signature by the Private Secretary (REDACTED) and come with a draft accept/decline letter, unless advised otherwise by private office
- if the event is date-specific, consult private office first to check availability
- if the letter is received by email, please ensure an email is included under the address
- always provide a PS minute with supporting advice. When recommending an accept or a decline, please give robust consideration of the merits of Ms Cunningham undertaking an event
- consult communications colleagues (for example, for a conference invite) and special advisers where necessary
- use the PS minute to indicate which category of visit (see briefings section) you believe is correct
- please always complete the addressee salutation for diary cases to be signed by the PS (for example 'Dear Ms Caldwell,')

**Contacts**

REDACTED Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED Assistant Private Secretary (Diary and correspondence)	REDACTED
REDACTED Head of Communications Rural Economy and Environment	REDACTED
David Miller Special Adviser	REDACTED

## **Derek Mackay - Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution**

1. Derek Mackay - top tips
2. Derek Mackay - speeches
3. Derek Mackay - engagement briefing
4. Derek Mackay - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Derek Mackay - submissions
6. Derek Mackay - correspondence
7. Derek Mackay - contacts

### **Derek Mackay - top tips**

Derek Mackay MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

- email briefing and speeches should be with private office one week before an event
- submissions should clearly indicate whether they are routine, immediate or urgent
- the box closes on at 4pm on Thursday

### **Speeches**

Mr Mackay places great importance on the quality of his speeches and wants to ensure that they are both interesting and relevant to his audience.

### **Debates and committee appearances**

- discuss with Mr Mackay's APS in the first instance if a full read-out speech is required or if a bullet point speech will suffice
- private office will arrange, where possible, a pre-meeting for all committee and debate appearances
- provide a draft copy of the speech and briefing at least one week prior to this pre-meeting
- following the pre-brief, please advise private office when the final briefing and speech will be provided

### **Formal speeches of about 10-15 minutes**

- Mr Mackay would like a 5-10 minute chat with the lead official for high profile speeches, ahead of drafting
- for the majority of speeches, unless to a large audience, the opening and closing should be strong and both written in full, while the rest of the speech will be delivered by Mr Mackay from bullet points which should be provided, setting out the things that Mr Mackay should highlight during the main body of his speech
- where possible, announcements or good news stories should be included in the speech
- include some interesting quotes which Mr Mackay may wish to refer to
- try to make the speech lively and interesting and not just covering fact after fact
- use headers for every section Mr Mackay is going to cover
- ensure that podium/lectern and PowerPoint equipment (if being used) is provided at all times

## Length and format

- discuss with organisers how much time will be allocated to Mr Mackay and indicate how long this will be at the start of the speaking note
- we would not expect Mr Mackay to speak for any longer than 15 minutes and would do so only in exceptional circumstances. Normally Mr Mackay would speak for around 10 minutes, however, this depends on the event so, if you are unsure, contact Mr Mackay's APS
- remember to include all speeches as **separate** documents

## Questions

- Mr Mackay likes to offer audiences an opportunity to ask questions after a speech, even if it hasn't been indicated on the programme. Please make every effort to determine if there are any strong reasons why Mr Mackay should not take questions. In the briefing pack, please include a note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to be raised and relevant lines to take in question and answer format

## Small or informal speeches 2-5 minutes long

- for small or informal speeches (for example, openings) please provide bullet points only
- where possible, ensure that there is a podium or lectern available

## Speaking rate

- Mr Mackay speaks at 140 words per minute. Remember to reduce each speech by 20% to allow the Minister to add his own personal steer to the speech and/or to allow interventions for parliamentary debates

## Speech content

- welcome key people at the start
- include what the audience expect to hear from Mr Mackay
- if possible, add announcements (this relates to large speeches, committee or debate appearances)
- make the speech audience appropriate. **This is vitally important.** For example, if Mr Mackay is speaking to an audience of school children, do not provide a speech that is too heavy with policy information
- include interesting quotes for large speeches
- check if anyone in the audience is worthy of a mention. For example, anyone retiring, anyone receiving an OBE and so on
- think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up-to-date position possible by consulting with the press team where necessary
- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience whilst still keeping the speech interesting and lively

## Speech format

- include all speeches as **separate** documents

- Arial font
- font size 16
- double spaced.
- include page numbers
- mark when the speech ends together with the word count (if written in full)

## **Engagement briefing**

### **Key points**

- ensure that you use Mr Mackay's preferred briefing template for engagements or meetings

Producing accurate, detailed briefing for events and meetings is vitally important as your briefing papers are the key documents ministers use to prepare.

If you have any queries regarding briefing papers please contact Mr Mackay's APS.

### **Briefing cover sheet**

- briefing for events should always be submitted with the correct covering sheet. Fields that are not used should be deleted

### **Contacting the event/meeting organiser**

- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Mackay to do or discuss, and the format of their event as early as possible. If anything is unclear, or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office
- at events/conferences, Mr Mackay prefers to speak and then take questions. In order to maximise the number of invitations that he can accept, Mr Mackay will usually leave the event at the end of his question and answer

### **Deadline**

- briefing and speaking notes for Mr Mackay should be with the private office close of play on the date requested by private office. Meeting this deadline is important as Mr Mackay needs time to review all briefings and speaking notes in order to raise any questions with lead policy colleagues well ahead with the event
- if you are not going to meet this deadline it is your responsibility to let private office know **immediately**

### **Details have changed**

- if there are any changes to be made to the briefing packs already submitted, contact the APS to discuss whether a full revised pack is required or if a separate sheet can be sent up. Normal practice is to resend the document in full via email with a covering note clearly explaining where the changes have been made

### **Documents provided by private office**



- all documents we have received in relation to an event will have been sent to you and, where appropriate, should be incorporated into the briefing. Let Mr Mackay's APS know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents being sent to us. These must be photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, check with private office where they should be sent to Parliament or St Andrew's House

### **Ministerial electronic diary**

- **do not** forward electronic diary invites from private office to others without prior agreement
- **do not** make changes or additions to events in Mr Mackay's diary. Contact private office if updates are required
- let private office know **immediately** if the attendee list changes or a different official will take the lead for providing a briefing pack and/or official support

### **Pre-brief**

- if you strongly feel that it would be beneficial for Mr Mackay to have a pre-brief, please contact Mr Mackay's Private Secretary to discuss. We cannot guarantee that there will always be time to accommodate requests, but we will try our best to help

### **Press office**

- it is vital to liaise with communication colleagues before any event to ensure that it is in the media planner and an appropriate handling strategy is devised. Communications colleagues will decide if a press officer is required on the day
- Communications should be consulted on lines to take, the merits of a press release and other media possibilities **before** we see the briefing. This should be done as early as possible in the process
- do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by communications colleagues

### **Postcodes**

- for external visits, provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers to enable us to inform the local MSP/MP when a minister will be visiting their constituency. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- if organising a day of events, provide contact details and a postcode for each component of the day. In addition, each individual part of the day should have a separate briefing pack. We will require an outline for the day and a media plan in advance

### **Required information**

- biographies of the key people at the event. If councillors are involved, include their political background
- rough composition of the audience and approximate numbers attending

- suggested lines to take on topics which might be raised
- relevant facts, figures and/or current issues
- running order
- an address (with postcode), map of location, contact number of venue and contact number of the lead official are **essential**
- where Mr Mackay is chairing more formal meetings, provide a steering brief
- Mr Mackay's draft speaking note (if required). Make sure the speech is attached as a **separate** document to the briefing pack. Please refer to the full guidance note on speeches

### **At the event - official attendance**

Mr Mackay expects a policy official present at all engagements. Advise in your briefing which official(s) will be accompanying Mr Mackay and provide their mobile number(s). Officials attend to brief Mr Mackay if the need arises and to take any actions/feedback back to deal with or feed on to the relevant colleagues. Ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when Mr Mackay arrives. Make yourself known immediately to Mr Mackay and/or Private Secretary.

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Mr Mackay takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

### **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

#### **General**

- replies are to be simple, straightforward and to the point. Complex quotes, tables and text in italics should be avoided. Consider what needs to be in the main answer and what could be put into the background note
- answer only what is being asked
- consider any recent media coverage on the PQ's subject carefully. Make reference to the coverage and any lines Mr Mackay should note
- Mr Mackay prefers his background briefing for supplementary questions to be in question and answer format
- for further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions

#### **Oral**

- the Presiding Officer has requested that all answers are to be kept as brief as possible. As a general rule, answers should be no more than five lines long, however answers can be more detailed at Topical Questions, given the greater focus on the issue being raised
- give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs

## Written

- when PQs request information which is publicly available and/or has been supplied in an earlier PQ, the response should refer the Member to the earlier reply

## Submissions

### Key points

Submissions to Mr Mackay should be used to inform him of any issue which requires a decision, to inform him of policy developments and to invite him to participate in Scottish Government official events.

When preparing a submission for Mr Mackay, always use the submissions template and consider the following:

## Annexes

- each annex must have an appropriate title
- where possible, the covering minute should be no longer than one page, clearly outlining the key points and decisions required. Mr Mackay likes submissions to get straight to the point at the outset
- do not include PQs, letters, press releases or embedded files within submissions
- for submissions that are to be approved by Mr Mackay and sent on to others it would be helpful to provide an electronic copy list
- note that private office does not use eRDM. Do not use Objective links

## Priority marking

- the timing section is essential to both Mr Mackay and to private office. In addition to the priority marking, a deadline date should also be clearly stated. No other dates (for example, final publication date) should be included. Also, please leave out statements such as, 'a quick response will allow x'
- only use the following priority markings:  
**Immediate** - if a response needed within 24 hours (this cannot be guaranteed)  
**Urgent** - if a response required within one to three working days  
**Routine** - generally a response will be issued within a week; however, any specific deadline date **must** be stated. Mr Mackay doesn't need to know your deadline, just his own  
**For info** - you are not seeking a response

## Recommendations and/or conclusions

- these should always be in **bold**

## Template

- submissions for Mr Mackay should be typed on the submissions template. The font should be Arial 12pt

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Key points

Follow Mr Mackay's preferences for Ministerial Replies and other general correspondence. We would advise all officials to check the MACCS system for scans of previous signed letters in order to provide draft letters which meet Mr Mackay preferences. When a letter has issued, please check the final signed copy against a locally saved version of the draft you sent to Mr Mackay originally to check for changes made. Those letters which do not meet the ministerial preferences will be rejected back for redraft.

### Address

- MSPs - **use the reply address provided on the original letter.** The Ministerial Correspondence Unit will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs request that replies be sent to their constituency address
- constituents - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, refer to the constituent by their full name and, if given, state their full address with postcode
- emails - where the correspondence has been received via email, the MSP should receive an email back and that address should replace the postal address at the top of the reply letter

### Content

- ensure that responses are as helpful as possible and the points raised by the correspondent are answered
- avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question(s) asked
- if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date
- in the first sentence refer to the date of the original correspondence and what the response is regarding.

### Co-ordinated responses

- many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Make sure that the all facts and figures given in responses are consistent
- where a letter touches on more than one policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials across the SG departments. Mr Mackay is keen to demonstrate a fully informed government that communicates internally. This will ensure that the correspondent receives a reply which is as helpful and robust as possible

## Date

- include only the month and year on the letter. The date will be added by Mr Mackay when he signs the letter
- **Deadlines**
- make every effort to ensure that **all** MACCS cases are sent to private office within the set timescales and, where possible, even sooner to allow extra time for potential discussion, clarification and/or redrafting
- if the MACCS case is not sent to private office within the deadline, include a short note explaining the delay
- a response going out later than Mr Mackay's final deadline must include an apology for the delay in replying

## Diary replies

- unless a response is very long and/or highly detailed, **all** diary cases should be signed by the Private Secretary. This includes letters from MSPs, MPs, MEPs and councillors
- after 'Kind regards' leave four lines, use the ruler to move the text to point number four and type **the PS's full name in capital letters and in bold**. Then press enter once, use the ruler to move the text to point number four and type PRIVATE SECRETARY
- all diary cases should have an accept and decline letter unless advised differently
- when drafting an acceptance letter include the sentence asking the correspondent to 'please contact the Minister's Assistant Private Secretary to make the necessary arrangements'
- when drafting a decline do not use specific diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation. State that Mr Mackay is unable to accept the invitation due to a fully committed diary. Offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event
- always include a **fully** completed PS minute, including advice from the Communications team if the event involves a press element. Always use the correct template
- if you have received a recommendation from private office regarding a diary case you **must** ensure that this is included on the PS minute. Do not assume that private office will remember the case history
- try to keep all diary replies short and simple, getting to the point as quickly as possible with no unnecessary information

## Ministerial electronic diary

- **never** forward electronic diary invites from private office to others
- **do not** make changes or additions to events in Mr Mackay's diary. Contact private office if updates are required
- let private office know **immediately** if the attendee list changes or a different official will take the lead for providing a briefing pack and/or official support

## **Ministerial replies**

- Mr Mackay should sign all letters from the following correspondents: MSPs, MPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, elected council members, chairs of fringe bodies, constituents, friends/acquaintances and parliamentary candidates
- leave four lines, use the ruler to move the text to point number four and type **DEREK MACKAY**

## **Non-MACCS cases**

- ensure that the original correspondence is included with the reply letter for all cases prepared off MACCS, which are emailed directly to Mr Mackay's inbox

## **Official Replies**

- include 'Thank you for your letter of dd Month to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution regarding XXXXX. I have been asked to respond' or a similar form of words. Mr Mackay would like all official replies to be as helpful and informative/sympathetic as possible.

## **Reallocation**

- Ministerial Replies and diary cases can be reallocated for Mr Mackay to answer on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and include the words, 'I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio' at the end of the first paragraph
- similarly, correspondence sent to Mr Mackay which is for a different portfolio must be re-assigned

## **Redrafting**

- if a case is sent back for redrafting, amendments need to be made urgently and the case returned to us as quickly as possible so that it can be issued on time
- if unsure why a letter needs to be redrafted, please check the case history in the first instance

## **Spelling**

- proof read the response and use the spell checker before issuing it

## **Titles**

- include the full title of the correspondent; for example, Director, Chairman, Convener
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included
- never use Mrs/Miss unless the correspondent does

## **Contacts**

### **Private office:**

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED

### **Special advisers**

Callum McCaig	Special Adviser for Finance	REDACTED
Ewan Crawford	Special Adviser for Constitution	REDACTED

## **Joe FitzPatrick - Minister for Parliamentary Business**

1. Joe FitzPatrick - top tips
2. Joe FitzPatrick - speeches
3. Joe FitzPatrick - engagement briefing
4. Joe FitzPatrick - Parliamentary Questions (PQs)
5. Joe FitzPatrick - submissions
6. Joe FitzPatrick - contacts

### **Joe FitzPatrick - top tips**

Joe FitzPatrick MSP is the Minister for Parliamentary Business. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box closures**

Mr FitzPatrick receives papers throughout the parliamentary week, Monday to Thursday. The box closes at 3.30pm on Friday and private office will arrange boxes as required during recess, subject to the Minister's availability.

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

- Mr FitzPatrick speaks at around 160-170 words per minute
- use short paragraphs no more than two or three sentences long
- any question and answer should be clearly marked up in the index
- bold text should only be used to indicate emphasis
- use A4, Arial font 18pt
- 1.5 line spacing
- include a word count at the end of the speech
- mobiles should be kept on at all times when providing speeches for Mr FitzPatrick
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon. Remember this is being spoken

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in the writing a speech guidance.

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

- contact the Diary Secretary who will arrange a pre-meeting one week before the engagement or meeting and advise timings
- send all briefing to the private office before the pre-meeting
- officials should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of an engagement in case Mr FitzPatrick needs to discuss any issues
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google



maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service

- ensure any official attending an event with Mr FitzPatrick notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Mr FitzPatrick can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr FitzPatrick or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners etc.**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Mr FitzPatrick is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Mr FitzPatrick takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them

- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

## **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - two short paragraphs max
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste in to an email
- on submitting the answer advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

### **Written PQs**

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- answers should be factual and concise
- consider likely supplementary questions
- check whether special adviser clearance is required
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr FitzPatrick is keen that standard replies are used.

Read guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to ministers should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Mr FitzPatrick should be able to quickly identify what they are required to consider
- the standard templates available are a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Mr FitzPatrick
- the covering minute should be no more than two pages
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links – use Word
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Mr FitzPatrick is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- emails should be sent to MinisterPB@gov.scot, copying in Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Constitution
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, communications officers and special advisers are copied in - ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

### Contacts

#### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary	REDACTED

#### Special adviser

Contact John McFarlane REDACTED

#### Comms

Contact REDACTED, REDACTED

## Shona Robison - Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

1. Shona Robison - top tips
2. Shona Robison - speeches
3. Shona Robison - engagement briefing
4. Shona Robison - Parliamentary Questions
5. Shona Robison - submissions
6. Shona Robison - correspondence
7. Shona Robison - contacts

### Shona Robison - top tips

Shona Robison MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### Box times

- Ms Robison receives a box on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the parliamentary session. **The box closes at 4pm**
- there is not a regular box on Mondays and Fridays
- the deadline for box closure for the **weekend box is Thursday at 4pm**
- private office will provide details of recess arrangements
- contact private office if you want advice on the optimum time in a particular week that Ms Robison has to consider papers or if you would like her to consider an urgent submission
- include the appropriate priority marking in the subject header of any email - see submissions for more details
- as well as policy papers, Ms Robison's correspondence, diary queries and PQs go in her box

### Speeches

#### Key points

- Ms Robison prefers full speaking notes in Arial size 16, 1.5 line spacing with a word count, paragraphs not splitting over pages and pages numbered
- speeches should be broken up into short paragraphs
- Ms Robison speaks at 150 words per minute
- most speeches should be around 10 minutes and **not longer**
- every speech should have a clear message to be communicated. It is useful if the drafter of a speech can send a draft outline of the speech to Ms Robison prior to the pre-meeting. This gives Ms Robison time to consider whether she feels the speech hits the main points and messages she wishes to cover
- Ms Robison is generally happy to do Q and A after a speech, providing she is comfortable with the subject area. This should be confirmed with private office before agreeing with the organiser
- where Ms Robison has to give a short speech at a more informal event, a one page of bullet points should be prepared (with fuller explanation in the background briefing)
- briefing packs for events should state whether the event is formal or informal

### **For parliamentary business:**

- ministerial statements should be drafted in full. Ms Robison will then make amendments to the text ahead of delivery as required/seek redraft
- opening speeches for parliamentary business should be provided in full. The length of the speech provided should allow time for Ms Robison to take interventions or mention additional points
- closing speeches for parliamentary business may not be required. Instead, it is helpful if key bullet points of pertinent points and rebuttals of issues likely to be raised are provided. Please discuss exact requirements at the pre-meet/with private office

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

- ensure that you use Ms Robison's preferred briefing template for engagements or meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Robison notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Robison can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Robison or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A

- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Robison is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Robison takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

If a briefing pack has been sent to private office (for example for a debate) and there are extensive changes, please resend in full. If changes are minor then please just email instructions where we need to add or replace individual pages.

### **Meetings**

Please note that when attending a meeting with Ms Robison, officials should take a note of the meeting. There is a misconception that private office do this. However, private office will ensure that ministerial actions from the meeting are taken forward. It is useful to know in advance who will be doing this, and a draft meeting note (not circulated widely) should be with private office within three days of the meeting.

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in Ms Robison's diary, private office will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This email will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required and will indicate how long Ms Robison is able to attend - if you are unsure please speak with private office.

You may also find it helpful see how a typical ministerial week usually runs.

## Parliamentary Questions

### Written Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

- Ms Robison wishes to be as helpful as possible to members in written answers. Answers such as 'None' or 'This information isn't held centrally' should not be used on their own. A further helpful statement should also be included, where possible. Ms Robison has noted that some answers contain information in the background note that is helpful and releasable, yet the actual answer is sometimes too curt
- answers generally should avoid repetition and the drafter should always proof read before sending to the ET Programme Hub
- don't put 'See Background Note to S5W-XXXX' in a background note, it should be copied over for ease of reference
- if tables are included this must be in a format which can be edited. If the table is available elsewhere (for example ISD) then please refer the member to this in the answer. Complex tables can also be published on SPICE with a BIB number

For further advice please see DG Health and Social Care PQ guidance.

### General and Portfolio Questions

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries
- give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting Oral PQs. Often, the most obvious questions are missed. **Private office cannot request supplementary questions from other members and we will forward on as soon as we have received them from special advisers**
- please also include positive key facts - this enables Ms Robison to rebut criticisms and turn questions into an opportunity to present policy favourably
- ensure that the drafter of the PQ or someone else familiar with subject is contactable on the day the PQ is to be answered. Ms Robison may require last minute information
- the drafter of the PQ should also watch Ms Robison deliver the answer (or check the Official Report afterwards). This will let you see Ms Robison's style and also alert

private office if an inaccuracy has been made that we need to correct or if any follow up is required

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information. If the table is available elsewhere (for example ISD), then please refer the member to this in the answer. Complex tables can be published on SPICE with a BIB number
- for further advice please see DG Health and Social Care PQ guidance

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Robison is keen that standard replies are used.

Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to Ms Robison should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Robison should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Robison
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Robison will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:
  - Routine** (over three days)
  - Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)
  - Immediate** (within 24 hours)Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Robison is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling



- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance
- for urgent submissions, Ms Robison is happy to take them in the form of an email. If doing this please ensure you use appropriate headings and that the purpose of the email is clear. Please speak to the private office team who will be happy to advise when this is an appropriate option

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Key points

Ms Robison attaches great importance to correspondence.

The Cabinet Secretary wants replies to be as helpful and to the point as possible. Dismissive replies referring back to Health Boards/local authorities without any helpful information are very seldom accepted. If an issue raised in correspondence cannot be resolved positively, please ensure that a PS minute with background is provided.

Guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p><b>MSPs</b> - use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'</p> <p><b>Constituents</b> - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given</p> <p><b>Email</b> - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed by private office</p>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary, REDACTED via email at <a href="mailto:cabsechs@gov.scot">cabsechs@gov.scot</a> to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)</p>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open the letter with some background, for example: 'Thank you for your letter of x about....'</li> <li>• ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent</li> <li>• avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question asked</li> </ul>

- if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date

## **Constituents**

When drafting an Official Reply, check whether the correspondent is one of Ms Robison's constituents (Dundee City East) as the Cabinet Secretary requests Ministerial Replies to all her constituents (see also Ministerial Replies below)

## **Co-ordinated responses**

Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent

## **Date**

- refer to the date of the original letter in the response
- if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Ms Robison's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed

## **Delays**

- if the response is more than four weeks since the original letter was written, include an apology for the delay in replying
- if the MACCS case is not sent up to Ms Robison within the private office deadline, include a short note explaining the delay

## **Font**

- the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12
- note that the St Andrew's House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat

## **Diary Invitations**

- ensure a valid postal/email address is put on the final reply letters - this is important so we can make sure the letter reaches the correct recipient
- make sure the final reply letters are signed off by the Private Secretary rather than Ms Robison. Private office sends out all accept/reject letters, Ms Robison does not sign these off
- ensure that the PS minute includes all specific policy details/key points/comms views - the more information given the more likely Ms Robison will make a firm decision
- flag up any diary cases that are going to be sent up late - especially if it is an event that is in the near future. This allows us to let the organisation know well before the event is taking place
- last but not least - ensure that the grammar/spelling is accurate - in private office we don't have time to change all the letters individually so this is a great help

### **Sample diary case responses:**

Accept:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, to attend your Annual Conference.

Ms Robison would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business, I would be grateful if you could contact the

Cabinet Secretary's Diary Secretary, REDACTED, via email at [cabsechs@gov.scot](mailto:cabsechs@gov.scot) to a mutually convenient date/make the necessary arrangements.

**REDACTED**  
**PRIVATE SECRETARY**

Decline:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, to attend your Annual Conference on 1 April 2015.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Ms Robison will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

**REDACTED**

**Language**

- **PRIVATE SECRETARY**
- consider who will be reading the response, for example children/young people
- ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood
- do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences, for example: 'I am writing to...', 'First of all,...', 'I have to advise you that...', 'Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...'
- keep sentences short and avoid jargon
- if a case is reallocated to Ms Robison for answer, the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise' should be used
- do not use the phrase 'I am afraid'. An alternative is 'Unfortunately'
- do not use the phrase, 'Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene'. An alternative wording is 'it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene'
- where appropriate add, 'I hope this is helpful' at the end of a response

**Layout**

- try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so
- do not alter the default page setup. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word
- leave five lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow Ms Robison to write the greeting and her signature
- if, due to the above formatting, Ms Robison's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page
- do not use subject titles at the beginning of letter. Instead, incorporate in the opening sentence: 'Thank you for your letter of 1 January about.....'

- do not use paragraph numbering
- ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>> , Your ref, signature
- ensure that Ms Robison's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals: SHONA ROBISON
- text should be centre justified

## **Ministerial Replies**

Ms Robison wishes to sign all letters to her constituents

## **Official Replies**

Please include 'I have been asked by Ms Robison to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf' or a similar form of words

## **Reallocation**

Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Ms Robison is answering on behalf of the cabinet secretary/minister who received the original letter. Thank the correspondent for their letter to the original cabinet secretary/minister and add, 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise'

## **Signature**

Letters for the Cabinet Secretary's signature:

SHONA ROBISON

Letters for PS/Ms Robison's signature:

REDACTED

## **Spelling**

Private Secretary

Use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it

## **Timing**

It is always helpful if cases can reach Ms Robison as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary

## **Titles**

- include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convenor/Chairperson, this should also be included
- do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
- do not use Esquire after a name

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence)	REDACTED

## **Special adviser**

Davie Hutchison, REDACTED

## **Maureen Watt - Minister for Mental Health**

1. Maureen Watt - top tips
2. Maureen Watt - speeches
3. Maureen Watt - engagement briefing
4. Maureen Watt - Parliamentary Questions
5. Maureen Watt - submissions
6. Maureen Watt - correspondence
7. Maureen Watt – contacts

### **Maureen Watt - top tips**

Maureen Watt MSP is the Minister for Mental Health. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

#### **Box times**

- Ms Watt receives papers (a box) most days during the parliamentary session
- box closure times will vary depending on Ms Watt's diary - please contact private office to check
- check with private office for box closure times over recess

### **Speeches**

- for big set-piece events Ms Watt expects all speeches to be written out verbatim
- draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Ms Watt to consider and provide feedback
- Ms Watt speaks at about 120 words a minute
- speeches should be in Arial 16, 1.5 spacing, with a word count and paragraphs not split over pages. Please use sub-headings in the speech
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

### **Engagement briefing**

- ensure that you use Ms Watt's preferred template for engagements and meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Watt notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Watt can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Watt or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers) - see speech preferences

- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Watt is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Watt takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speech preferences
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

## Parliamentary Questions

### General and Portfolio Questions

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system, but either as two standalone word documents or a copy and paste into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

### Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Watt is keen that standard replies are used.

For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

### Submissions

#### Key points

- all submissions to Ms Watt should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Watt should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider

- the standard template is available as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, please include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Watt
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Watt will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Watt is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

Please keep correspondence consistent with Ms Watt's preferences.

Guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<b>MSPs</b> - use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'. All letters to MP's should also be directed to constituency office
	<b>Constituents</b> - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given
	<b>Email</b> - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed
<b>Contact details</b>	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Ms Watt's diary secretary. If the date of the event is flexible, give Ms Watt's email address as a contact detail, as this reduces the amount of calls to private office



- Content**
- open the letter with some background, for example: 'Thank you for your letter of x about....'
  - ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent
  - avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question asked
  - if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date

**Co-ordinated responses** Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Ensure that all the facts and figures are consistent

- Date**
- refer to the date of the original letter in the response
  - if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before Ms Watt sees it

- Delays**
- if the response is more than four weeks since the original letter was written, include an apology for the delay in replying
  - if the MACCS case is not sent up to Ms Watt within the private office deadline, include a short note explaining the delay

- Font**
- the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12
  - note that the St Andrew's House address details, our ref. and date are formatted. Please do not reformat

- Diary invitations**
- always draft two separate letters - one accepting and one declining the invitation. A separate letter for any other possible answers, such as that another minister will undertake the event should be drafted where appropriate. This should be done as a matter of course unless private office has indicated otherwise
  - always include a completed PS diary template, including background details and advice from officials, press office and special advisers - please note that Ms Watt wants to accept invites that add value and fit in with the strategic purpose
  - responses should be in the private secretary's name, unless the correspondent is a politician, or the private office specifically say that Ms Watt knows the correspondent personally
  - the private secretary does not say 'I have been asked to respond on the Minister's behalf' in a letter - this language should be for official replies only

Example decline letter

'Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Ms Watt will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.'

Ms Watt does not like reference being made to recess as a reason for not attending an event

- Language**
- consider who will be reading the response, for example young people

- ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood
- do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences, for example: 'I am writing to...', 'First of all,...', 'I have to advise you that...', 'Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...'
- keep sentences short and avoid jargon
- if a case is reallocated to Ms Watt for answer the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility' should be used
- do not use the phrase 'I am afraid'. An alternative is 'Unfortunately...'
- do not use the phrase, 'Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene'. An alternative wording is 'it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene'
- where appropriate add, 'I hope this is helpful' at the end of a response

## **Layout**

- try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so
- do not alter the default page setup. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word
- leave seven lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow Ms Watt to write the greeting and her signature
- if, due to the above formatting, Ms Watt's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page
- do not use subject titles at the beginning of a letter, instead incorporate in opening sentence 'Thank you for your letter of 1 January about...'
- do not use paragraph numbering
- ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>>
- ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals: MAUREEN WATT

## **Ministerial Replies**

Ms Watt wishes to sign all letters to her constituents

## **Official Replies**

Include 'I have been asked by Ms Watt to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf' or a similar form of words

## **Reallocation**

Ministerial correspondence can be reallocated so that Ms Watt is answering on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for this matter'

## **Signature**

Letters for Ms Watt's signature:  
MAUREEN WATT

Letters for PS/Ms Watt's signature:

REDACTED  
Private Secretary

- Spelling** Always use spell checker and proof read the response before forwarding to private office
- Timing** Although a private office deadline is provided, it only gives Ms Watt three days to sign off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach Ms Watt as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary
- Titles**
- include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener
  - if responding to a councillor, address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convenor/Chairperson, this should also be included
  - do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
  - if Ms Watt is writing Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr etc please ensure these titles are also used in address line. Either formally or informally throughout - not a mixture
  - do not use Esquire after a name

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)	REDACTED

### **Special adviser**

Davie Hutchison, REDACTED

## Aileen Campbell - Minister for Public Health and Sport

1. Aileen Campbell - top tips
2. Aileen Campbell - speeches
3. Aileen Campbell - engagement briefing
4. Aileen Campbell - Parliamentary Questions
5. Aileen Campbell - submissions
6. Aileen Campbell - correspondence
7. Aileen Campbell - contacts
8. Aileen Campbell - top tips

Aileen Campbell MSP is the Minister for Public Health and Sport. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### Box times

- Ms Campbell receives a box Tuesday to Thursday during the parliamentary session
- the box closes at 4pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays
- please note that, as there is no Friday box, the deadline for box closure for the **weekend box is Thursday at 4pm**
- private office will provide details of recess arrangements

### Speeches

#### Key points

- for big set-piece events, Ms Campbell expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. For a 5-10 minute speaking slot, bullets are preferable
- draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Ms Campbell to consider and provide feedback
- as a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech, and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon. Remember this is being spoken. Consider the audience

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can be found in writing a speech.

### Engagement briefing

Use Ms Campbell's preferred briefing template for engagements or meetings.

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google

maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service

- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Campbell notes their mobile number in the briefing and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Campbell can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Campbell or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required
- 

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Campbell is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Campbell takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them

- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.

If a briefing pack has been sent to private office (for example for a debate) and there are extensive changes, please resend in full. If changes are minor then just email instructions where we need to add or replace individual pages.

## **Meetings**

Note that when attending a meeting with Ms Campbell, officials should take a note of the meeting. There is a misconception that private office do this. However, private office will ensure that ministerial actions from the meeting are taken forward. It is useful to know in advance who will be doing this, and a draft meeting note (not circulated widely) should be with private office within three days of the meeting.

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in Ms Campbell's diary, private office will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This email will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required and will indicate how long Ms Campbell is able to attend - if you are unsure, speak with private office.

Where a speech needs to be drafted, it is useful to contact private office prior to any pre-meeting to give Ms Campbell an outline of the main points to be made. This gives Ms Campbell an early opportunity to give a steer and hopefully means that not too much tweaking is required after any pre-meeting.

Ms Campbell prefers briefing to be to the point and not too lengthy in 'lines to take' and Q and A format. A pre-meeting is a good opportunity to check that Ms Campbell is comfortable with the material and gives her the chance to request further specific briefing if required.

If Ms Campbell is making a visit, private office will require the full postal address (including postcode) at least a week in advance, to allow us to notify local MSPs and MPs that Ms Campbell will be in their area.

## **Parliamentary Questions**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the SG's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Campbell is keen that standard replies are used.

Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerks office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

### Key points

- all submissions to Ms Campbell should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. Ms Campbell should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Campbell
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Campbell will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)

**Immediate** (within 24 hours)

Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Campbell is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends

- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

**Correspondence****Key Points**

Please keep correspondence consistent with Ms Campbell's preferences.

The guidance listed below is in alphabetical order:

**Address**

**MSPs** - use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'

**Constituents** - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given

**Email** - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed by private office

**Contact Details**

When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact Ms Campbell's diary secretary via email at [ministerPHS@gov.scot](mailto:ministerPHS@gov.scot) to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)

**Content**

- open the letter with some background, for example: 'Thank you for your letter of x about....'
- ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent
- avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question asked
- if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date



**Co-ordinated responses**  
**Date**

Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent

- refer to the date of the original letter in the response
- if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Ms Campbell's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed

**Delays**

- if the response is more than four weeks since the original letter was written, include an apology for the delay in replying
- if the MACCS case is not sent up to Ms Campbell within the private office deadline, include a short note explaining the delay

**Font**

- the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12
- note that the St Andrew's House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat

**Diary**  
**Invitations**

- ensure a valid postal/email address is put on the final reply letters - this is important so we can make sure the letter reaches the correct recipient
- make sure the final reply letters are signed off by the Private Secretary rather than Ms Campbell. Private office sends out all accept/reject letters, Ms Campbell does not sign these off
- ensure that the PS minute includes all specific policy details/key points/comms views - the more information given the more likely Ms Campbell will make a firm decision
- flag up any diary cases that are going to be sent up late - especially if it is an event that is in the near future. This allows us to let the organisation know well before the event is taking place
- last but not least - ensure that the grammar/spelling is accurate - in private office we don't have time to change all the letters individually so this is a great help

Sample diary case responses:

Accept:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport, to attend your Annual Conference.

Ms Campbell would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business, I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary via email at ministerPHS@gov.scot to a mutually convenient date/make the necessary arrangements.  
REDACTED  
PRIVATE SECRETARY

Decline:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport, to attend your Annual

Conference. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Ms Campbell will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

REDACTED  
PRIVATE SECRETARY

### **Language**

- consider who will be reading the response, for example children/young people
- ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood
- do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences, for example: 'I am writing to...', 'First of all,...', 'I have to advise you that...', 'Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...'
- keep sentences short and avoid jargon
- if a case is reallocated to Ms Campbell for answer, the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise' should be used
- do not use the phrase 'I am afraid'. An alternative is 'Unfortunately'
- do not use the phrase, 'Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene'. An alternative wording is 'it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene'
- where appropriate add, 'I hope this is helpful' at the end of a response

### **Layout**

- try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so
- do not alter the default page setup. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word
- leave five lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow Ms Campbell to write the greeting and her signature
- if, due to the above formatting, Ms Campbell's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page
- do not use subject titles at the beginning of letter. Instead, incorporate in the opening sentence: 'Thank you for your letter of 1 January about....'
- do not use paragraph numbering
- ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>> , Your ref, signature
- ensure that Ms Campbell's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals: AILEEN CAMPBELL
- text should be centre justified

### **Official Replies**

Please include 'I have been asked by Ms Campbell to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf' or a similar form of words

**Reallocation** Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Ms Campbell is answering on behalf of the cabinet secretary/minister who received the original letter. Thank the correspondent for their letter to the original cabinet secretary/minister and add, 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise'

**Signature** Letters for the Minister's signature:  
AILEEN CAMPBELL  
Letters for PS/Ms Campbell's signature:  
REDACTED

**Spelling** Private Secretary  
Use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it

**Timing** It is always helpful if cases can reach Ms Campbell as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary

**Titles**

- include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convenor/Chairperson, this should also be included
- do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
- do not use Esquire after a name

## **Contacts**

### **Private office**

REDACTED      Private Secretary      REDACTED

REDACTED      Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)      REDACTED

### **Special adviser**

Davie Hutchison, REDACTED

## **Michael Matheson - Cabinet Secretary for Justice**

1. Michael Matheson - top tips
2. Michael Matheson - speeches
3. Michael Matheson - engagement briefing
4. Michael Matheson - Parliamentary Questions
5. Michael Matheson - submissions
6. Michael Matheson - correspondence
7. Michael Matheson - contacts

### **Michael Matheson - top tips**

Michael Matheson is the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. You can find his biography, portfolio responsibilities and photos on the gov.scot website. Please only use these photos for publications.

- Mr Matheson does not take a regular box on a Monday or a Friday – these are constituency days. Plan ahead and provide submissions in good time. You should generally allow at least a week for clearance
- view the portfolio split for Mr Matheson and Ms Ewing
- Mr Matheson prefers submissions to be clear, concise, and to the point. He doesn't need a huge amount of extraneous detail. Don't spend the whole first page of a submission on background information that he probably already knows – get quickly to the immediate issue (additional background could be placed in an annex)
- if your submission is urgent, highlight this in the covering email. If there are specific timing constraints please set this out in the submission and covering email
- boxes will be much less frequent during recess, so plan ahead. We tend to get a lot coming up in the last box before recess so please try and send things up well before this if possible – or hold it back until after recess if it can wait
- have a lot of emails, submissions and correspondence coming to the team so it does sometimes take longer to get back to you on things. Get in touch if there's something we haven't come back on and we'll try and track it down and expedite it
- avoid embedding attachments inside submissions – we might miss them when printing them off. It's fine to have multiple attachments to an email
- all submissions should be sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice mailbox, not to personal mailboxes

### **Speeches**

- Mr Matheson speaks at 120 words per minute. Speeches should be Arial, 16 point, with 1.5 spacing
- keep paragraphs very short and avoid breaking sentences over the page where possible
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate Word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- use section headings to break the speech up. Speeches should have a beginning, a middle and an end, and should flow rather than jumping from topic to topic. Avoid adding jokes, light-hearted tangents, or flowery language – speeches should be drafted pretty straight, and he can embellish it himself if he wants to
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken

- speeches shouldn't normally be more than about 10 minutes long, though you can discuss this with private office. Mr Matheson is usually happy to do Q&A after a speech
- for big set-piece events Mr Matheson expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. For a 5-10 minute speaking slot, bullets are preferable
- draft speeches for significant events should to be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Mr Matheson to consider and provide feedback
- as a guide, you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a 5 minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech
- drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. We can provide an example of a good speech if that would help. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech
- if providing Q&A briefing, be realistic about how much you're providing – Mr Matheson doesn't have time to read and memorise 50 pages of background briefing. Prioritise key lines that are likely to come up. Consider the audience – if it is broadly supportive, he won't need a lot of briefing; if it is more hostile, prioritise the tricky questions that they're likely to ask, rather than the questions you'd like them to ask
- where possible include examples of things Mr Matheson has seen or done in a ministerial capacity
- involve Comms Justice in drafting the speech and make use of the Justice script and momentum story scripts they hold
- always include a word count and note of the allocated time at the end of the speaking note

### **Engagement briefing**

- ensure that you use Mr Matheson's preferred briefing templates for either engagements or meetings
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). For more see speech preferences
- the cover page should provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Include details of the building (for example, court, church hall etc) and consider entrances/drop off points if there are multiple. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless otherwise agreed
- ensure any official attending an event with Mr Matheson includes their mobile number in the briefing, and has their phone switched on. This means that we or the Cabinet Secretary can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

### **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- maximum 20 pages unless agreed otherwise with private office

- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q&A
- bios (and pictures if possible) for meeting attendees not previously met
- speaking note - if required - see speech preferences

### **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

### **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only
- why Mr Matheson is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of
- please remember that, for external engagements, Mr Matheson likes to send out thank you letters within seven days of the event. Please supply a draft letter as early as possible after the visit

### **Parliamentary engagements**

Mr Matheson takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speech preferences
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser. Private office can provide further advice on parliamentary support.

### **Parliamentary Questions**

#### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables

- not have reference to not doing something due to financial reasons; the answer should always refer to the policy reason

Background notes should include:

- intelligence on what's been asked and why
- an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- previous recent PQs on the same subject and relevant correspondence
- a Q&A with the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone Word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the Scottish Government's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information
- if the information has already been published, provide a link to this data

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Matheson is keen that standard replies are used. Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

## Submissions

- all submissions to Mr Matheson should have a clear **purpose**, **conclusion** and **timescale** for response. The Cabinet Secretary should be able to quickly identify what he is being required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Mr Matheson, and indicates level of urgency
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Mr Matheson will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links

- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes
- use the correct priority timing:

**Routine** (over three days)

**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)

**Immediate** (within 24 hours).

Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us. Also check that Mr Matheson is available to clear it.

Consideration should also be given to constituency days (Monday and Friday), recess, holidays and weekends

- use the current security markings, such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

### Ministerial Replies

Mr Matheson likes to respond personally to:

- his own constituents (Falkirk West Constituency)
- Chief Constable/Chief Executives
- MSPs/MPs/MEPs
- elected members from other administrations
- councillors/conveners
- key stakeholders
- victims of serious crime or if the concerns are of a particularly sensitive nature

### Key points

- use the reply address provided on the letter. Many MPs and MSPs request that the reply is sent to their constituency address, particularly during recess
- open the letter with some background, for example 'Thank you for your letter of x about...'
- ensure the reply answers the points raised by the correspondent
- avoid padding which doesn't answer the question asked
- always proof read draft replies very carefully. A number of letters are sent up with basic errors and correcting and reprinting these takes time

### Non-MACCS correspondence

Some correspondence, such as inter-ministerial correspondence and letters from Parliamentary Committees, is dealt with outwith MACCS. Private office will send the letter directly to officials with a request for advice and draft reply.

Please include the original letter when submitting advice and reply to private office.



## Diary

Mr Matheson receives far more invitations than he can accept. In the main he can only accept invitations which:

- allow engagement with key stakeholders
- offer an opportunity to give a message to a key audience
- provide a major platform to make announcements
- provide a hook for other announcements
- 

Always seek advice from Comms Justice when considering an invitation. Their advice should be recorded on the PS minute on MACCS.

Replies to invitations are sent out in the name of the Private Secretary, so always ensure that the reply is drafted to be sent on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary.

If the date of the engagement is specified you can check the Cabinet Secretary's diary with private office.

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Correspondence)	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary (Diary)	REDACTED

For any engagement that Mr Matheson attends, early consideration should be given to the publicity requirements and photo opportunities. Close relations with the Press Office are essential, so please ensure that Communications Justice are copied into all submissions and briefing.

REDACTED	Head of Justice Communications	REDACTED
REDACTED	Senior Media Manager	REDACTED
REDACTED	Media Manager	REDACTED
REDACTED	Media Manager	REDACTED

### Special adviser

John McFarlane REDACTED

## **Annabelle Ewing - Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs**

1. Annabelle Ewing - top tips
2. Annabelle Ewing - speeches
3. Annabelle Ewing - engagement briefing
4. Annabelle Ewing - Parliamentary Questions
5. Annabelle Ewing - submissions
6. Annabelle Ewing - contacts

### **Annabelle Ewing - top tips**

Annabelle Ewing is the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs. You can find her biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box**

Ms Ewing generally takes a box on a Monday at 3pm and on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 4pm. Papers she gets on a Thursday will generally be returned on the Tuesday of the following week unless a response is required sooner.

It is always helpful to indicate on your submission or email when you need your response by. Urgent papers can be dealt with by email on Friday and Monday but please try and give us plenty notice. You should generally allow a week for clearance.

If an urgent submission is going to be coming up, ensure this is flagged to Ms Ewing as early as possible so that she is not taken by surprise.

Boxes will be much less frequent during recess, so plan ahead. We tend to get a lot coming up in the last box before recess, so please try and send things up well before this if possible – or hold it back until after recess if it can wait.

We have a lot of emails, submissions and correspondence coming to the team so it does sometimes take longer to get back to you on things. Do get in touch if there's something we haven't come back on and we'll try and track it down and expedite it.

Avoid embedding attachments inside submissions – we might miss them when printing them off. It's fine to have multiple attachments to an email.

### **Diary**

Ms Ewing is keen to protect Mondays and Fridays for constituency business as much as possible. She does understand that there will be occasions when an event falls on these days and is happy to consider.

Wednesday and Thursday mornings are generally the best options for any visits. Any event taking place outwith the parliament building should only be accepted with the caveat that is subject to parliamentary business as Ms Ewing will need to be granted slippage.

The diary fills up quickly so it is helpful to have as much notice as possible of potential events. Dates can be held as 'possible' if you give us notice, but the time may be used if not confirmed.

When an event is confirmed in the diary, private office will issue a meeting request to the lead official requesting briefing. Please always let us know as soon as possible if there are any errors in this or if timings/location change. This can have a knock-on effect for the rest of the day.

Official support should be assumed for all visits or meeting, unless agreed otherwise with private office.

## **Speeches**

### **Speaking engagements**

Pre-meetings will be arranged in advance (where time allows) to discuss Ms Ewing's requirements. Failing that, an initial outline of the proposed speech would be helpful for Ms Ewing to consider.

### **Meetings**

Ms Ewing would like key messages - no speaking notes are required. A steering brief may be helpful if the meeting takes a more formal format and Ms Ewing is chairing.

### **Debates/committee**

Full speaking notes are required. For debate closing speeches, draft the speech with key messages/rebuttals and leave page space between each for her to fill in per debate itself.

### **Tips**

- it is helpful to have first drafts of speeches – including bullets – as early as possible. Private office will usually set a deadline and pre-meetings should be arranged, but please ask if this hasn't been done
- avoid jargon
- read speaking notes aloud to check fluency
- consult special advisers and communications colleagues about political and media interest

### **Format**

- Arial font 26pt
- 1.5 line spacing
- page breaks at the end of a paragraph
- pages numbered
- include a word count and estimated time of delivery

### **Speaking rate**

Ms Ewing speaks at around 160 words per minute.

**Please ensure the following box is completed and included as page one:**

#### **Speech Box**

Clear message of speech

Layout of room - round table, theatre style etc  
Lectern or sitting as part of a panel?  
Make-up of the audience?  
How many are attending?  
What do they want to hear?  
Any media interest?  
Have special advisers and communications colleagues been consulted?

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

## **Engagement briefing**

Consider the event being attended and ensure the level of briefing is appropriate. Short visits do not require a lengthy briefing pack.

Make sure you use the correct internal or external engagement briefing templates. Observe deadlines for engagement briefing – Ms Ewing likes to see briefing in advance so plan ahead to get it up in good time.

## **Key points**

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure that you use Ms Ewing's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Ewing should note their mobile number in the briefing and have this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Ewing can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- ensure mobile numbers for supporting officials are included
- speaking notes should always be included as separate documents
- if amendments are required after the briefing has been submitted, track changes or make it clear in the covering email
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Ewing or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- background information can be provided in FMQ format if appropriate
- if a previous meeting has happened, include a note of progress since
- always consult communications colleagues in advance of events and ensure special advisers are sighted
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

## **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

## **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than 10-12 pages

## **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Ms Ewing is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

## **Parliamentary engagements**

Ms Ewing takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser.  
If unsure, speak with private office in good time.

## **Parliamentary Questions**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)
- answer the questions

- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked
- reflect on any relevant Community and Social Justice/Scottish Government activity on subject including committee appearances

Officials should:

- seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system, but either as two standalone Word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

## Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the Scottish Government's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer. When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Ms Ewing is keen that standard replies are used.

Read further guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs. If in doubt, either private office or the parliamentary clerk's office would be happy to help.

## Submissions

- all submissions to Ms Ewing should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. The Minister should be able to quickly identify what she is required to consider
- use the standard template as a helpful guide. If sending in an email format, include headings on purpose, timing and recommendation
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether this is for information, or requires a decision from Ms Ewing
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Ms Ewing will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes

- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over three days)  
**Urgent** (within three days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Ms Ewing is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister to make a decision should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, communications officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Assistant Private Secretary	REDACTED

Email: MinisterCSLA@gov.scot

The ministerial mailbox should always be used. Personal mailboxes are not checked regularly.

### Communications

Communications Manager REDACTED  
 Media Manager REDACTED

### Special adviser

John McFarlane, REDACTED

## **Fergus Ewing - Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity**

1. Fergus Ewing - top tips
2. Fergus Ewing - speeches
3. Fergus Ewing - engagement briefing
4. Fergus Ewing - Parliamentary Questions
5. Fergus Ewing - submissions
6. Fergus Ewing - correspondence
7. Fergus Ewing - contacts

### **Fergus Ewing - top tips**

Fergus Ewing is the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box closure**

The Cabinet Secretary's box is a physical box with printed papers prepared by Private Office. The box closes Monday – Thursday at 4pm when Parliament is sitting.

Anything sent after 4pm will not be sent to the Cabinet Secretary until the following evening. Thereafter, the first box the Cabinet Secretary will receive each week will be on a Tuesday morning. Please bear in mind that Mr Ewing will be preparing for Cabinet on a Tuesday morning. Boxes will be less frequent during recess periods. Private Office will advise separately on those arrangements.

### **Briefing**

Consider the type of meeting/event and tailor the briefing appropriately. This is very important as Mr Ewing has a busy diary and may only have the opportunity to read briefings between meetings.

The briefing should be clear about the purpose of the meeting and what Mr Ewing needs to get out of it. Consider why Mr Ewing is having the meeting, what are the aims (what does he wish to get out of it), what might he be pressed on by stakeholders/attendees? A one pager covering the purpose and key points is always helpful. Mr Ewing likes to know who he is meeting and their role/position. It is important that the briefing accurately reflects the name/s of the officials attending meetings and events.

Briefings should be sent to Private Office one week before the event. Where possible this should be adhered to and only by exception, having discussed with Private Office, be late.

We understand there are occasions that briefing/submissions etc. may need to be changed after being sent and if this is the case it is important to return in tracked changes or clearly marked where the changes have been made.

We would also ask, where possible, to only be copied into a final version and not be included in the email exchanges that lead to a final document. This, we appreciate, will be dependent on the situation, as it is sometimes useful to understand the status of submissions/briefings/responses.



If Mr Ewing has a meeting or event that covers a number of policy areas it would be helpful if a single policy area lead on the coordination and preparation of the full briefing pack.

## Speeches

### Key points

Mr Ewing always:

- needs to know who is in the audience - get this from the organiser
- needs to see any agenda. Conferences often have a theme and there may also be papers such as a brochure. It's important to get hold of these as it will help write a speech relevant to the occasion
- needs the facts, and then views. Bullet points are usually enough. Keep it simple. Mr Ewing usually wishes to record where there is an UK government responsibility and set out the facts on that
- likes to get speeches one week before the event to check over and allow time to commission more information, check facts or briefing
- does not like long complex sentences full of abstract nouns
- does like helpful factual material - and detail of relevant facts
- **prefers bullet points** - as a guide you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech
- speaks at about 120 words a minute.

When writing a speech please remember:

- they should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- have paragraphs no longer than two or three lines
- have page breaks at the end of a sentence. Paragraphs should not run over pages
- **pages must be numbered**
- to include examples of things Mr Ewing has done in his ministerial capacity
- to involve communications and special advisers in drafting
- to always check the speech for accuracy – facts and figures should be checked and double checked
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack
- to avoid using acronyms and jargon - this is being spoken
- Mr Ewing likes to speak at a lectern - please request this if possible

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact Private Office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Read the guidance on writing ministerial speeches.

Please consider these points when drafting a speech:

- make the speech relevant to the event
- who are the audience and what do they want to hear about
- the speech should use positive language
- please do not recycle or copy and paste parts of previous speeches on the same subject
- try to avoid getting bogged down in policy unless necessary

- include the big picture context - start and end with the big picture
- include some relevant context, especially in the introduction
- include any constitutional points that are appropriate
- cover hot issues and topical subjects
- potential announcements should be discussed with communications colleagues.
- add some colour to the speech to personalise it and feel free to include testimonials, startling facts, and quotes
- it is important to read the speech aloud to identify any potential challenges or problems in delivering it.

See examples of speeches on the gov.scot website.

## **Engagement briefing**

- ensure that you use the Cabinet Secretary's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings.
- briefing should always follow the structure laid out in the template including the sequence of the annexes
- email briefing and speeches one week before the event
- an address and postcode (checked with the organisers) should be provided to the diary secretary as far in advance as possible. Briefing should include the postcode/map/directions venue contacts. Please check the details carefully as incomplete/confusing directions lead to delays and stress
- provide a map (where necessary), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- any official attending an event with Mr Ewing should note their mobile number in the briefing, and have this phone switched on. This means that we or the Cabinet Secretary can contact them to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- briefings should be short, succinct and have an easy to follow structure. For regular meetings, they should be 8 pages maximum. Briefings for larger meetings that the Cabinet Secretary is chairing should include a steering brief but should still be succinct
- request a lectern at the venue and note on the briefing and if not, advise the layout, for example speaking from a table
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speech preferences for more
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please use track changes or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- please differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient and proportionate for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

## **Meetings with key stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences and high profile events**

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages (number pages and don't embed documents in word documents (they can get missed in our printing)
- cover sheet/index
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed (use FMQ format)
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q&A
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- a full delegate list
- speaking note - if required

## **Meetings with external stakeholders, receptions or events, including dinners**

- similar to above but ideally no more than eight pages

## **Routine visits/engagements or photo-ops**

- logistic briefing only - no more than six pages
- why Mr Ewing is attending
- when, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of

## **Parliamentary engagements**

The Cabinet Secretary takes parliamentary engagements such as debates, statements or committee appearances very seriously. Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant Manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- FMQ style background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note - see speeches
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and the special adviser before being sent to private office.

## **Parliamentary Questions**

### **General and Portfolio Questions**

Answers should be:

- short, succinct and to the point - ideally no more than four or five lines long (two short paragraphs max)

- answer the questions
- avoid complex quotes or tables
- background note should include an FMQ style brief on each of the relevant issues
- around three or four of the most likely supplementary questions that could be asked

#### Officials should:

- **seek to clear draft answer/background briefing with the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office** - when doing so these should not be sent through the PQ system but either as two standalone Word documents or copy and pasted into an email
- on submitting the answer, advise private office whether the answer has been cleared by the special adviser or not
- ensure that they are contactable the morning the question is being answered or advise private office who should be contacted for last minute queries

#### Written PQs

When drafting written answers, they should:

- address all points in the question, but do not offer up information not requested (unless it is helpful to the Scottish Government's position to do so)
- be helpful in tone
- be relevant - no padding
- avoid repetition
- use tables for complex numerical information
- **seek to clear draft answers with the special adviser before submitting to private office if subject matter is controversial or likely to cause media interest**

Background notes should be succinct and provide context to the question and answer.

When written PQs request information which is publicly available or has already been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, Mr Ewing is keen that standard replies are used.

For further information follow the guidance on Parliamentary Questions.

There are strict guidelines on formatting for PQs - if in doubt either private office or the parliamentary clerks' office would be happy to help.

#### Submissions

- all submissions to Mr Ewing should have a clear **purpose, conclusion** and **timescale** for response. The Cabinet Secretary should be able to quickly identify what they are
- it helps private office if the covering email clearly states whether **this is for information**, or **requires a decision** from Mr Ewing
- keep submissions as short as possible (one or two pages). Do not include background detail Mr Ewing will already be aware of
- do not embed attachments in your submission document or send as Objective links
- ensure each page is numbered
- remove all template comments and any tracked changes

- use the correct priority timing:  
**Routine** (over 3 days)  
**Urgent** (within 3 days but more than 24 hours)  
**Immediate** (within 24 hours)  
 Include the priority in the subject box of the accompanying email and if immediate, call private office to alert us and also check that Mr Ewing is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends
- use the current security markings such as Official Sensitive, not Restricted or Confidential. Please also be clear what is in the public domain and what is not
- proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling
- submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead minister, or the Cabinet Secretary and First Minister, to make a decision, should be submitted on a 1:2 basis
- ensure that all relevant ministers, DGs, comms officers and special advisers are copied in. Ideally comms and special advisers should be consulted in advance

Further information can be found in submissions to ministers.

## Correspondence

Ministerial correspondence is subject to corporate targets and should be answered within 20 working days. Draft replies for ministerial consideration should be with private office within 10 working days.

Guidance for drafting correspondence and handling invitations is below and private office are more than happy to answer any queries you may have. The Cabinet Secretary attaches great importance to correspondence and would like all policy colleagues to draft quick and sympathetic response to all letters from members of the public.

Mr Ewing will personally respond to all letters from MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, Councillors, Chairpersons/Chief Executives of Public Bodies and key stakeholders, friends/acquaintances, and constituents (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber).

In each case there is a "main" point the correspondent makes. Replies should show that the Cabinet Secretary has "got it". To do that use "playback" - in other words begin the letter by repeating the main concern raised, simply to show that the Cabinet Secretary has understood the primary issue, concern, point, criticism or whatever is the purpose of the email or letter. Then respond by setting out the facts and then our views. Candour is good. We cannot satisfy all comers, nor should we raise expectations unfairly.

Use plain English.

Dates should follow Scottish Government convention (e.g. 18 October 2016 not 18th October).

Please remove unnecessary parts of the template (for example unused refs or signature). Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put the Minister's name in the signature space – the letter should be ready to print and not need further editing by private office.

Leave 4 lines between the date and the start of the letter for the "Dear x" to be handwritten and 6 lines between the end of the letter and the Cabinet Secretary's name for the signature.

We check the MACCS system regularly for all draft responses for clearance so there is no need to phone/email to alert us.

Further guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p><b>MSPs</b> - please use the reply address provided on the letter (link to Cab Sec's template). MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'.</p> <p><b>Constituents</b> - When an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given.</p> <p><b>Email</b> - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, please put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed by Private Office.</p>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary, REDACTED, via email at CabSecREC@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)</p>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about...."</li><li>• please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent</li><li>• avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked</li><li>• if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Co-ordinated responses</b>	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs or press releases. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent.</p>
<b>Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• please refer to the date of the original letter in the response</li><li>• if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, please check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Mr Ewing's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed</li></ul>
<b>Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• if the response is more than 4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</li><li>• if the MACCS case is not sent up to the Cabinet Secretary within the private office deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay</li></ul>

**Font**

- the main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12
- please note that the St Andrews House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat.

**Diary  
Invitations**

- ensure a valid postal/email address is put on the final reply letters - this is important so we can make sure the letter reaches the correct recipient
- make sure the final reply letters are signed off by the Private Secretary rather than the Cabinet Secretary. Private office sends out all accept/reject letters; the Cabinet Secretary does not sign these off.
- please ensure that the PS Minute includes all specific policy details/key points/comms views - the more information given the more likely the Cabinet Secretary will make a firm decision
- flag up any diary cases that are going to be sent up late - especially if it is an event that is in the near future. This allows us to let the organisation know well before the event is taking place
- last but not least - please ensure that the grammar/spelling is accurate - in private office we don't have time to change all the letters individually so this is a great help

Sample diary case responses:

Accept:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity, to attend your annual conference.

Mr Ewing would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business, I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary, REDACTED, via email at CabSecREC@gov.scot to arrange a mutually convenient date/make the necessary arrangements.

REDACTED

PRIVATE SECRETARY

Decline:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity, to attend your annual conference.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Mr Ewing will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

REDACTED

PRIVATE SECRETARY

<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• please consider who will be reading the response e.g. children/young people</li> <li>• ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. See SG writing guide for reference</li> <li>• please do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences e.g.: "I am writing to..."; "First of all,..."; "I have to advise you that..."; "Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about..."</li> <li>• keep sentences short and avoid jargon</li> <li>• if a case is reallocated to Fergus Ewing for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise" should be used</li> <li>• please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately"</li> <li>• please do not use the phrase, "Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene". An alternative wording is "it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene".</li> <li>• where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response</li> </ul>
<b>Layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so</li> <li>• please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, please use the ministerial template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.</li> <li>• please leave four lines free at the top between the date and the start of the letter and six lines at bottom of the text of the response to allow the Cabinet Secretary to add his signature</li> <li>• if, due to the above formatting, the minister's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page</li> <li>• please do not use SUBJECT TITLES at the beginning of letter, instead incorporate in opening sentence "Thank you for your letter of 1 January about....."</li> <li>• please do not use paragraph numbering</li> <li>• ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. &lt;&lt; text&gt;&gt; , Your ref, signature.</li> <li>• please ensure that the Cabinet Secretary's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals at the left hand side of the letter "FERGUS EWING"</li> <li>• the private secretary's signature should also be at the left hand side of the page as detailed below</li> <li>• text should be centre justified</li> </ul>
<b>Official replies</b>	Please include "I have been asked by Mr Ewing to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.
<b>Reallocation</b>	Ministerial replies can be reallocated so that Mr Ewing is answering on behalf of another Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise".



**Signature** Letters for the Minister's signature

FERGUS EWING  
Letters for PS/Mr Ewing's signature

REDACTED

Private Secretary

**Spelling** Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.  
**Timing** It is always helpful if cases can reach the Cabinet Secretary as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.

**Titles**

- please include the full title of the correspondent i.e. director/chairman/convenor
- if responding to a councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as convenor/chairperson, this should also be included.
- do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
- do not use Esq after a name

## Finally

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. We are always happy to discuss issues and find the best way forward, so please pop along to 2N.11 in SAH or pick up the phone.

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED	Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Deputy Private Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Diary Secretary	REDACTED
REDACTED	Correspondence Secretary	REDACTED

### Special adviser

Kate Higgins, REDACTED

Depending on the policy area, we deal with Comms Economy, Rural Economy and Environment Comms, Comms Digital and RPID Comms. Details are in the staff directory.

## **Humza Yousaf - Minister for Transport and the Islands**

1. Humza Yousaf - top tips
2. Humza Yousaf - speeches
3. Humza Yousaf - engagement briefing
4. Humza Yousaf - Parliamentary Questions
5. Humza Yousaf - submissions
6. Humza Yousaf - correspondence
7. Humza Yousaf - contacts

### **Humza Yousaf - top tips**

Humza Yousaf is the Minister for Transport and the Islands. You can find his biography and portfolio responsibilities on the gov.scot website.

### **Box closure**

Mr Yousaf's box is a physical box with printed papers prepared by private office. The box closes Monday to Friday at 4pm when parliament is sitting. This is the last time Mr Yousaf can receive papers by email (for printing) and through MACCS (Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System) and PQ (Parliamentary Questions) systems that day.

Anything sent after 4pm will not be sent to Mr Yousaf until the following evening. Boxes will be taken less frequently during recess periods. Private office will advise separately on those arrangements and provide information via the Transport Scotland staff notice.

Ministers regularly receive high volumes of material. Do not assume that your paper will be read on the day you submit it. Urgent decisions cannot be guaranteed but please discuss with private office and Private Secretary/Transport Scotland as soon as possible if you have urgent information.

### **Principles and plain English**

There are a number of different types of briefings/submissions and material that Mr Yousaf requires. No matter what the type of material is, it is essential to remember to keep it short, focused, and to the point.

All material should be produced following the principles of plain English. This means clear, straightforward and concise language, using short words, everyday English where possible.

You should avoid jargon, acronyms and legalistic words and explain any technical terms when they have to be used.

Sentence length should be kept down to an average of 15-20 words and try to stick to one main idea in each sentence.

Where possible avoid repetition of known common facts.

### **Speeches**

- there are a number of types of speeches for events, differing in length, tone and style

- contact the organisers to discuss directly what is expected/required from Mr Yousaf – for example is a PowerPoint presentation required with speaking notes or just a speech? Is a background slide required to give Mr Yousaf's title?
- consider in detail the main message, purpose and audience
- consider including cross-cutting connections to wider/other policy areas across the portfolio and wider Scottish Government. Include relevant links to Mr Yousaf's previous portfolio responsibilities where this could be of benefit
- full written speeches should be a maximum of 10 minutes long. For short, in formal speeches of two to five minutes, bullet points should be used
- Mr Yousaf speaks at 150 words per minute. Please reduce speeches by 15-20% to allow for personal additions or, if a speech for parliament, interventions from MSPs
- use headings for each section of the speech. Use page numbers and Arial font size 16 and 1.5 line spacing
- keep each paragraph short and sharp ensuring that these do not run over into the next page
- think about announcements or good news for inclusion in the speech. Also any interesting and relevant personal/local mentions including about the venue/quotes
- consider if the chair or another speaker is worthy of a special mention, for example a recent OBE/award
- make the speech engaging and interesting with a logical structure, tailored to the audience and occasion. Always read it out loud to yourself and colleagues
- consider if there is an experienced speechwriter in your team/wider team who could assist
- consider seeking input from communications and special advisers at the initial drafting stage. Check with private office if Mr Yousaf would like sight of a draft in advance of the main briefing pack
- include speeches as a separate Word document in your covering email
- if providing an updated speech, highlight the changes in yellow

## **Engagement briefing**

There are a number of different types of engagement briefings. These can be when Mr Yousaf has been invited to give a speech, to cut a ribbon and mark an occasion, or when he is invited to a meeting (often as meeting chair) or a photo call.

These can be arranged at Transport Scotland's request but often occur as a result of an invitation or follow-on from correspondence (MACCS mostly). Once the event date is agreed by private office, they will issue a request for briefing and speaking notes, if appropriate, with a deadline (usually at least five working days before the event).

- the lead official should contact the organisers to discuss directly what is expected/required from Mr Yousaf well before the briefing is due to private office. Is a PowerPoint presentation required with speaking bullets, or a speech?
- liaise with Transport Scotland communications colleagues to ensure handling considerations have been thought through – communications will then decide if a press officer is required at the event
- consider if the Scottish Parliament should be pre-informed of what Mr Yousaf will announce, for example a draft letter could be sent to the relevant parliamentary committee outlining any announcement. If in doubt contact Transport Scotland's Committee Liaison Officer

- use the engagement briefing template which will contain at least the following sections. Delete fields that are not relevant, and keep the briefing short, focused and use plain English:
  - highlight the main message and purpose of Mr Yousaf's attendance
  - provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. If the location is difficult to find, detailed local directions are required (no Google map links). For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
  - ensure there is a space for Mr Yousaf's car and consider personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for both Mr Yousaf and private secretary
  - biographies of key people (and photos if possible). If councillors are involved state their party
  - an event running order
  - an outline composition of the attendees/audience, MSP/councillor attendance and numbers
  - current issues, links to wider Scottish Government policy and relevant facts and figures
  - suggested lines for Mr Yousaf to take/use and concise Q&A on topics likely to be raised
  -
- for formal meetings with Mr Yousaf chairing, provide a chair's steering brief covering each agenda item
- incorporate all documents related to the event within the engagement briefing template except for speeches. These should be in a separate Word document, and sent within the same covering email and the engagement briefing
- official support is expected at all engagements unless otherwise advised by private office, and the number of officials should be kept to a minimum
- if the engagement is a closed, uncontroversial photocall there should be a discussion with private office and communications colleagues regarding official support
- inform private office of any changes to the event, lines to take, attendees or official support. If providing an updated engagement briefing pack highlight changes/updates in yellow
- officials should arrive at the engagement early as Mr Yousaf may request a pre-meet

## Parliamentary Questions

MSPs can ask (sometimes called table) Parliamentary Questions (PQs). These are often written PQs but sometimes they are oral - to be answered orally in person by the minister in parliament.

The reference number will show what type it is. 'W' included in the reference indicates it is written PQ and 'O' in the reference indicates it is an oral PQ. PQs are allocated via the PQ tracker system and the templates for response to the MSP and background note with information for the minister are included in the system. The action officer will receive an email from the PQ system which will also give the private office deadline.

- where written PQs request information which is already publicly available and/or has been provided in an earlier PQ response, the answer should refer the MSP to this using standard text - see page 14 of PQ guidance for staff

- both written and oral answers should be in plain English, short and factual. They must directly answer the question being asked and only the question - if necessary written answers can be slightly longer than oral answers
- all PQs should be accompanied by a background note. These are not published and should contain additional information for the minister. This might include why the question is being asked, if there has been recent political activity, media coverage on the issue or a campaign, MACCS cases and any other additional relevant information
- highlight potentially high profile PQ responses to special advisers and communications colleagues when submitting in the system
- for oral answers (Topical, General or Portfolio Questions) supplementary Q&A should be provided for supplementary questions in the chamber. A lead official must be contactable on the morning of the OPQ in case of a phone call from private office/Mr Yousaf. They should also watch the PQ on Saltire TV in case any (immediate) follow-up is required and to help shape future responses
- avoid complex quotes or tables, however if these are absolutely necessary for complex questions, the information can be placed in SPICE (Scottish Parliament Information Centre). The answer to the written PQ should refer to the SPICE Bib Number using the standard text – see PQ guidance for staff

## Submissions

Submissions to ministers are written briefings for ministers (sometimes these are referred to as ministerial briefing or minutes to ministers). They can be for the minister's information or when a decision is required. Sometimes private office will request advice and sometimes officials will decide. Make sure you address the correct minister(s) with their current title.

- **Fergus Ewing** is the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity – oversees the whole transport portfolio (not major projects) as well as his wider portfolio
- **Keith Brown** is the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work – Mr Brown has retained responsibility for all major transport projects (not Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP)) and shares the lead on high speed rail with Mr Yousaf
- **Humza Yousaf** is the Minister for Transport and Islands – Mr Yousaf shares responsibility for high speed rail with Mr Brown and leads on all other transport policy/projects including EGIP
- always copy all submissions and emails to the 'Transport Scotland Ministerial Submissions List'. This is kept updated (it includes all three ministers listed above) and saves time creating copy lists and when issuing by email. You can then add other colleagues who need to see the submission/email
- use the standard submissions to ministers template. Remember to keep your submission short, focused and use Plain English. Include your contact details as private office and ministers may need to follow up with you by phone
- for known issues, often an email is appropriate or would suffice rather than a full submission. Consider this option, especially in response to a simple enquiry from private office. Include a recommendation to discuss on the phone if appropriate
- outline the key points and the recommendation upfront, on the first page if possible
- relationship to current policy/practice, cross-cutting issues, key facts, arguments, sensitivities, options and financial and legislative implications should be in the body of the submission (not in an Annex)
- consider any media or potential media interest, discuss with communications colleagues and special advisers where appropriate and include the agreed position in your submission

- consider any Scottish Parliament committee interest. If in doubt contact Transport Scotland's Committee Liaison Officer (Bertrand Deiss)
- documents (for example a draft letter, report before publication) should not be embedded within a submission. Include additional attachments in the covering email and label these clearly
- in your covering email please highlight: the title, priority marking, what is required (for information/for decision), the number of pages in the submission and attachments and also whether the papers are best printed in colour
- private office do not use eRDM (electronic Record and Document Management system) and submissions should always be sent in Word document format
- in addition to a priority marking, please include Mr Yousaf's deadline date (if applicable). Other deadlines (final publication date etc) should not be mentioned as it can cause confusion. Avoid statements such as 'Routine, however a quick response will allow x,y etc'.
- use priority markings:  
**Immediate** – response within 24 hours (this cannot be guaranteed), please try not to use this unless unavoidable  
**Urgent** – roughly one to three working days turnaround  
**Routine** – not urgent, however if there is a deadline please still state it here. Mr Yousaf doesn't need to know your own deadlines, just when you need his response by

## Correspondence

Mr Yousaf receives considerable correspondence. Depending on who is writing, these letters are responded to as official replies (a letter from the relevant official) or a Chief Executive reply (where this is delegated to the Chief Executive of Transport Scotland to reply). In other cases, Mr Yousaf replies himself. Correspondence is allocated to action officers on the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS) and they will receive an email notification.

- consider in detail the contents of the letter and the issues/questions raised
- check that the allocation is correct. Ministers always reply in person to constituents. Call private office/the ministerial correspondence unit or Private Secretary/Transport Scotland for advice
- duplicate letters to numerous ministers should receive one single Scottish Government reply
- check the urgency of the letter - could/should it be answered quickly?
- often letters will cover an area that is wider than the remit of a team. Contact others quickly to request inputs and contributions to the reply. A fully informed, cross-government reply is appropriate
- the correct letter template should come through on the MACCS system, but it is worth checking this. MACCS is easily searchable for previous copies of scanned signed replies - use this to check the layout
- in the first sentence of the reply, refer to the date of the original correspondence and summarise the points raised
- answer all the points raised with a helpful and understanding tone, avoid general interest details which are not relevant
- many MACCS letters are related to other letters, PQs, and press lines. Be consistent in the lines used but if you are copying and pasting from other material ensure the response is tailored to the correspondence and that all facts and figures are up-to-date
- highlight potentially high profile responses to special advisers and communications colleagues when submitting your draft in MACCS

- use plain English, short words and everyday English and if you have to use technical terms, include an explanation
- complete/delete references as appropriate instead of leaving them blank. For example if there is no 'Your ref,' delete the 'Your ref' from the draft
- at the top left-hand side of the title header, Minister for Transport & the Islands, the text under the title should read Humza Yousaf MSP at size 9.5 and font Clan-News
- include only the month and year with a space for Mr Yousaf to insert the date
- the main text of the letter should be Arial, font size 12 and left aligned
- leave one space between the reference number and the date. Leave four lines between the date and the first line and four lines between the final words and **HUMZA YOUSAF**
- before submitting the case with a reply in MACCS, check it through thoroughly, if the letter is incorrect, it will be returned to the action officer
- if a MACCS case is returned to you for redraft, check the 'case history' notes for the details
- once a letter issues, check the final version against the version you sent to see if amendments have been made. Ensure these are incorporated into any further cases, and if relevant PQs and/or media lines. Significant changes are not usually made without consultation with action officers

## Diary cases

- Mr Yousaf receives diary requests and invitations for attendance at events. These letters are also processed on the MACCS system and allocated to action officers for advice and ministerial replies and they will receive an email notification.
- consider in detail the profile of the invitation
- always include an 'accept' and a 'decline' reply unless advised otherwise by private office
- complete the associated Private Secretary minute (which is your advice to the Mr Yousaf regarding whether to accept or decline) deleting fields which are not relevant and keeping your advice short and to the point
- a private office recommendation is only required for date-specific requests. If this recommendation differs from your advice, this should be clearly stated in the recommendation section
- diary replies (both accept and decline) should be short and focused without additional detail
- seek Transport Scotland communications input on your recommendation
- diary cases are usually signed by Mr Yousaf's Private Secretary, unless the requester is an MP/MSP

## Contacts

### Private office

REDACTED  
REDACTED  
REDACTED

Private Secretary  
Assistant Private Secretary  
Assistant Private Secretary

REDACTED  
REDACTED  
REDACTED

### Special adviser

John McFarlane (Transport), REDACTED  
Kate Higgins (Islands), REDACTED

## Communications

REDACTED, Transport Scotland Head of News, REDACTED