

Alex Salmond MSP
First Minister

Responsibilities include:

- Head of the devolved Scottish government
- Responsible for development
- Implementation and presentation of Government policy
- Constitutional affairs
- Promoting and representing Scotland

Box times

Outside Parliamentary recess, the First Minister normally receives a 'box' of papers each night Monday - Thursday and a weekend box.

The box closes at:

- 17:00 Monday to Thursday
- 12:00 on Friday

Biography

Alex Salmond was born in Linlithgow in 1954. He attended Linlithgow Academy before studying at St Andrews University, where he graduated with a joint honours MA in Economics and History.

In 1978 he entered the Government Economic Service as an Assistant Economist in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland. In 1980 he joined the Royal Bank of Scotland where he worked for seven years: first as an Assistant Economist before being appointed Energy Economist in 1982, and from 1984 Royal Bank Economist. Mr Salmond is now a visiting Professor of Economics at Strathclyde University.

He was first elected as MP for Banff and Buchan in 1987 and was elected as National Convener for the Scottish National Party in 1990. He served as leader of the opposition in the Scottish Parliament when he was elected MSP for Banff and Buchan Constituency in 1999. He stood down as SNP National Convener in 2000 and left the Scottish Parliament in 2001.

He was re-elected as Leader of the SNP in 2004 and elected as MSP for the Gordon constituency in May 2007.

He became the first ever SNP First Minister of Scotland on 16 May 2007.

He and his wife Moira married in 1981 and live in Strichen in Aberdeenshire.

When not working he enjoys horse racing, football - supporting Scotland and Heart of Midlothian FC - golf and reading.

Box Closure Times

Outside Parliamentary recess, the First Minister normally receives a 'box' of papers each night Monday - Thursday and a weekend box.

The box closes at 17:00 Monday to Thursday and 12:00 on Friday.

Remember that, as you submit your urgent document at 16:59, there could be a number of people across the organisation doing the same (and therefore avoid this wherever possible!).

One of the roles of Private Office (particularly given the volumes mentioned above) is to prioritise advice and ensure that urgent material is progressed quickly.

Therefore, when submitting material please let us know when you need a reply and we will try to meet this deadline. If something is particularly urgent then please call us to discuss.

General Information

The First Minister's office handles a high volume of information. On a typical day, the total volume of e-mails into the First Minister's e-mail box is around 500 emails - 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 his Private Office team.

The First Minister only has time to deal with e-mails or submissions where he personally is required to take a decision, or where it is clear that he personally has to be aware of the contents. If you are in any doubt, please send the e-mail or submission to the relevant Cabinet Secretary. They or their office can then make a judgement on whether it should be forwarded to the First Minister, including whether he 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 the links above. However, there are some common principles:

- **Stick to facts:** the First Minister prefers to receive key facts and attributable verbatim quotes. He does not find lines to take or Q&A useful except as supplementary material;
- **Keep material short:** often one page of bullet points is the most helpful type of background brief to receive;
- **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 Alex Salmond MSP, First Minister of Scotland.

Briefings

A call for briefing for a meeting or event will be issued from the First Minister's office as soon as the First Minister confirms that he wishes to undertake it. The deadline for briefing is one week before the event.

An 'event' is any engagement involving a formal speech or which requires some degree of coordinated choreography. Normally (but not always in the case of less strategically important events), the Events and Protocol team will lead on arrangements.

Briefing for Meetings

A call for briefing for a meeting or event will be issued from the First Minister's office as soon as the First Minister confirms that he wishes to undertake it. The deadline for briefing is one week before the event.

What is required for a meeting will depend on the subject and format. However, ideally, briefing for meetings should comprise:

- Cover page (N.B. this is **always** required) with the purpose of the event, who the First Minister is meeting, why he is meeting them. The attached template should be used. If policy officials will be present can they please be identified prominently.
- A list of people the First Minister will meet, with short biographical notes - particularly on political background - and photographs if possible. This should include a table plan if appropriate;
- Agenda (i.e. an indication to the First Minister of items that he may wish to cover in the meeting) together with any key handling issues. Please make clear whether the issues are things that are of concern to 'us' (i.e. Scottish Government) or to the other party at the meeting.
- If necessary, key arguments that the First Minister needs to get over in the meeting. (These could be combined with the agenda to form a steering brief for the First Minister.)
- Background information. This should include one page of key facts and figures relevant to the meeting, in bullet point format. It should also include a simple table showing funding streams relating to the policy area since 2008. Anything which should not be disclosed to the First Minister's interlocutors should be clearly labelled as such;
- If the briefing is for a meeting with a company, then the briefing should include a one page overview of the company including: numbers employed, recent performance, any government/public sector support received etc.

Key points to note:

- Keep all material short. The First Minister only has a short time period in which to cover briefing before meetings. In general, briefing for meetings should not exceed 10 pages in length. Bullet points are preferred.
- The First Minister prefers to work with concise facts rather than opinion. (He will form his own opinions).
- Please ensure that material is 'joined up' - i.e. that the First Minister has a coherent position across the Scottish Government. It is not helpful to have information from

one Directorate on an issue which has to be read in conjunction with different information from a different Directorate.

- There is no harm in reusing background briefing material where it remains relevant. But please check before submitting briefing that it is fully updated. (The First Minister does not find it helpful to receive a background note in October saying that such-and-such a development is expected in September!)
- Briefing should ideally come as a single document for easier handling in Private Office. Please ensure however that the files do not contain within them any "embedded" documents that need to be double-clicked to open - these can easily be missed when printing off in Private Office.
- All briefing should be copied to the appropriate Cabinet Secretary or portfolio Minister. It should also be copied to the relevant Special Adviser and to Communications First Minister.
- Briefing for events involving a speech, even a short or informal one, should be copied to the First Minister's speechwriters.
- If any changes need to be made to briefing after it has been submitted, please e-mail a full clean document again - this avoids confusion and ensures that the Private Office can provide the First Minister with the correct briefing for each engagement.

Participation in meetings

If the meeting or event is hosted by the Scottish Government, Private Office will usually invite the appropriate Cabinet Secretary or portfolio Minister to attend. The First Minister generally prefers to keep the number of officials attending meetings to a minimum. As a rule, he would expect the relevant Director to attend, along with another official with a detailed working knowledge of the issues under discussion, and who can take a note of the main points of the meeting. Please discuss with Private Office if you are unsure.

Officials should arrive 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled time in case the First Minister wishes to discuss the issues before the event begins.

NOTE: It is important that the lead official, or a suitably qualified colleague, should be contactable by telephone prior to and (if not in attendance) during the meeting. Briefing should provide landline and mobile details for the lead official and landline and mobile details for a second point of contact within the business area, who can act as a 'back-up' point of contact.

Briefing for Events

An 'event' is any engagement involving a formal speech or which requires some degree of coordinated choreography. Normally (but not always in the case of less strategically important events), the Visits and Events team will lead on arrangements. For events, briefing should comprise:

- Cover page with the purpose of the event, who the First Minister is meeting, why he is meeting them and any key handling issues. Please use attached briefing template. If policy officials will be present please could they be identified prominently.
- Biographies of main guests (and if it is a dinner or lunch, for all on the First Minister's table) and photographs if possible.

- Background information. This should include one page of key facts and figures relevant to the meeting, in bullet point format. It should also include a simple table showing funding streams relating to the policy area, for 07-08 and for the three years of the spending review. Anything which should not be disclosed to the First Minister's interlocutors should be clearly labelled as such.
- For events taking place outside Edinburgh, the briefing should include a note of the names and parties of local MPs, MSPs and Councillors.
- Table plan (or similar) for dinners or lunches.

also:

- An 'operational note': the running order for the event. Please discuss with the Visits and Events team who will provide this.
- Speech. This will be written by the First Minister's speech writer, but raw material should be provided in good time to allow them to do this.

The First Minister will sign appropriate thank you letters in follow-up to significant engagements - in particular for events where we have any reason to be indebted to the host (e.g. if they have helped in the organisation of a Government event). If appropriate, a thank you letter should be sent to the relevant Private Secretary as part of the briefing for the event to allow for prompt issue.

As with briefing for meetings, time is often short for the First Minister to consider this material (generally in the car to the event), so please be concise and joined up, factual and specific. In general, briefing packs should not exceed 10 pages in length (**not** including the speech and ops note).

Please note that for formal occasions, the First Minister should be referred to as the Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP, First Minister of Scotland.

The briefing requirements for every event will be different, and briefing packs should always be tailored to re requirements of the event in question. That said, the attached example illustrates briefing for event which is of high quality, and which meets the requirements set out above.

NOTE: It is important that the lead official, or a suitably qualified colleague, should be contactable by telephone prior to and (if not in attendance) during the event. Briefing should provide landline and mobile details for the lead official and landline and mobile details for a second point of contact within the business area, who can act as a 'back-up' point of contact.

Correspondence

First Minister (Ministerial Reply) or PS Reply

The First Minister will sign all letters to party leaders and prominent MPs, MSPs or Councillors, high profile individuals and to his own constituents (Aberdeenshire East). (Other MPs and MSPs will receive replies from other ministers on the First Minister's behalf.)

The First Minister is also keen to issue appropriate congratulatory letters in recognition of sporting achievement or artistic achievement and other success. Officials should take the initiative to suggest individuals whose recent achievements would make a letter of congratulation from the First Minister appropriate.

Other correspondence (excluding invitations) should be given a reply by officials. However, should the policy issue be particularly sensitive or unusual, you may prefer to draft a reply to issue from the appropriate Private Secretary. Please get in touch with Private Office for guidance if required.

Style

The First Minister views the role of the Scottish Government as being to enable things to happen. He therefore looks for his letters to be as positive, helpful and straightforward as possible. Appropriate detail should be provided, avoiding jargon and being suitable in tone to the correspondent. The First Minister will want to be as sympathetic as possible to the concerns of the correspondent, particularly where the letter concerns serious health problems or personal or family tragedy.

If the most appropriate response to the correspondent is to refer them to either the local council, constituency MP or constituency MSP, then this should be done swiftly and relevant contact details included in the letter.

Even where the Government is not able to act in the given situation set out in correspondence, letters should be taken seriously and challenged against Government priorities. Where correspondents have written about issues that are reserved to the UK Government, the First Minister may sometimes want to draw the attention of the appropriate UK Cabinet Minister to the concerns. Please consult the Private Office if unsure.

Replies should demonstrate an appropriate confidence in the Scottish Government's position and major strategic plans: in particular for taking forward the 5 priorities of wealthier and fairer, healthier, safer and stronger, smarter and greener. Drafts should also highlight where the Government Economic Strategy (which is not just about economics and has been described as an explanation of the purpose of the Scottish Government) or the Government's constitutional priorities have a bearing on the correspondent's concerns.

Letters should be presented in Arial font, 12pt (left justified).

Timescales

The First Minister is very keen that all correspondence addressed to him be dealt with as swiftly as possible. Close attention should be paid to the nature of the letter received to ensure that a response is expedited where the matter is pressing or high profile, or the correspondent is an important stakeholder.

For the date, please insert month and year only on the left hand side of the page. When nearing the end of the month, please date the response for the following month. If the reply is over 4 weeks past the date of the initial letter, please include an apology for the time it has taken to respond.

Invitations

The First Minister is made aware of invitations which he receives by the Private Office. Prior to the case being added to MACCS, he may indicate whether he would like to undertake the engagement. However, advice from officials is very helpful in deciding whether to accept an invitation.

In preparing advice on whether an invitation should be accepted, it can be useful to seek the views of the First Minister's Communications team if you are recommending acceptance of an invitation based mainly on presentational reasons. Please also ensure that advice takes account of opportunities to promote the Government's major strategic plans including the Government Economic Strategy (which as noted above is not just about economics) and the Government's constitutional priorities.

Special Advisors may be referred to if officials wish advice, but it is not necessary to gain an opinion prior to the invite being sent via MACCS. As always, please do not hesitate to call the Private Office if you would like an initial steer from us.

It is not necessary to contact the Diary Secretary to determine the First Minister's availability prior to the invite being sent via MACCS. We will consider this after the PS minute has been submitted.

All responses to invitations should be for the appropriate Private Secretary to sign, although in a few instances the FM may sign off diary replies to people he knows well. Please refer to the list of responsibilities below.

Signatures

Replies should be signed in bold capitals, justified left of centre, with the name as follows:

Letters for First Minister's signature

**ALEX
SALMOND**

Letters for Principal Private Secretary signature

**Principal Private
Secretary**

Letters for Private Secretary signature

(*Justice, Culture, International*)

Private Secretary

Letters for Private Secretary signature

(*Operational management of First Minister's Office*)

Private Secretary

Letters for Deputy Private Secretary signature

(*Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth portfolio; Infrastructure and Capital Investment portfolio; Rural Affairs and Environment portfolio*)

**Deputy Private
Secretary**

Letters for Assistant Private Secretary signature

(*Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio; Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy portfolio, Constitution, UK Relations*)

**Assistant Private
Secretary**

Letters for Deputy Private Secretary signature

(*strategic management of First Minister's diary; strategic management of correspondence issues; support for the First Minister on events*) **Deputy Private Secretary**

Letters for Diary Secretary signature

Diary Secretary

Policy Submissions

In most cases, the First Minister expects that the relevant Cabinet Secretary will sign off key decisions. However, there may be a few situations e.g. where the First Minister has previously said that he would like to be involved in the decision making process, or which are of significant strategic importance (relations with UK Government for example), where it is appropriate to either copy a policy submission to the First Minister or send a submission direct.

Please also take into account the general information guidance contained within these pages. Please call the relevant Cabinet Secretary's office, or the First Minister's office, if you are in doubt.

Any submission that the First Minister will see should follow the 'one page rule'. That is that the front page of the submission will summarise the key issue (why the submission is being put forward), the date by which a decision is required, a very brief background, and a recommendation.

More detailed information can be put in annexes, using the headings on the standard submission template as a guide, not as a prescription: relationship to current policy / practice; sensitivity; policy proofing; options considered; financial implications; Parliament / legislation; presentation; other relevant considerations.

Speeches/speaking notes

This section covers smaller, informal speeches that the First Minister routinely delivers. It aims to help you understand how the First Minister uses the speech material he receives and how you can help him to communicate a clear, positive story on your policy.

For guidance on longer speeches, including Parliamentary statements, media and other high profile events, please contact the FM's speechwriting team (details below).

As noted above, the Speechwriters will prepare speeches for the First Minister. However, to provide them with the necessary raw material, they should be copied briefing in good time. The commissioning e-mail for briefing will indicate by when the material is needed in order that the speechwriters can produce a speech. Officials should feel free to liaise directly with Peter to provide him with background information that he might find helpful. In addition, the following points are worth bearing in mind.

What should I provide to the speechwriting team?

The First Minister is a confident and capable speaker who engages well with his audience. He has a wide general knowledge and tends to add his own references and anecdotes. He retains and uses numbers well. He is effective and impressive when speaking off the cuff. For these reasons, the aim is not to produce a script that FM will follow verbatim.

Two additional points should be noted. First, smaller and less formal audiences tend to be most engaged by well-chosen facts and examples, rather than the detail of policy process and design. Second, the First Minister often seeks to present examples of local changes, which the audience can relate to, and which connect with the broader theme of his speech. It is important to show that the FM not only understands the policy area - but also its particular relevance to his audience.

Your aim should therefore be to provide the FM's speechwriting team with three things:

- interesting factual material - numbers, dates, events and local knowledge. Press notices from the relevant organisation are a good starting point, but do look wider;
- an outline narrative into which the FM can fit the material and his own input; and
- background on why the FM has been asked to speak, and the key issues his audience will have an interest in.

Keep it concise: you don't have to provide linked, flowing text. Bullet points are fine to capture the facts, examples and key policy messages. For the speech contribution you should aim to provide around 400 to 500 words. Though please don't feel constrained by this if you have more interesting material that FM could use.

What finished product will the First Minister receive?

For shorter speeches, typically five to ten minutes long, we would provide the FM with a speaking note of 500 to 700 words. A typical speaking note for FM has clear sign-posting, a logical flow, brief linkages between sections, simple references to relevant SG policies, some numbers and one or two jokes. The speechwriting team will always copy you in on the speech that we send up to the First Minister's office. Recent examples are attached at Speech A and Speech B.

What if I have a question?

- You should contact the FM's speechwriting team.

Submitting material

Most material will be submitted to us via the First Minister e-mail address. Please use this address rather than the personal address of the Private Secretary as this will allow us to progress issues when the relevant Private Secretary is not available.

Please ensure that your email/submission is addressed appropriately (e.g. PS/First Minister) and that the tone of the e-mail/submission takes into account that the First Minister may have sight of it and that it could form part of the official record.

Please Note: The First Minister's office handles a very high volume of information and we greatly appreciate all efforts to cut down on the amount of material the First Minister and his

team are 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 his Private Office team. Please also be careful in your use of the 'Reply All' function, where Ministers' offices are on the original copy list.

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

Nicola Sturgeon MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing & Cities Strategy

Responsibilities include:

- NHS
- Health Service Reform
- Allied Healthcare Services (including Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs)
- Acute and Primary Services (including GPs, NHS24 and SAS)
- Performance
- Quality Strategy
- Patient Safety
- National Service Planning
- NHS Workforce (including Partnership)
- NHS Pay

Box times

Ms Sturgeon receives a box each evening and at the weekend.

- This usually leaves the office at 5pm.

There may be flexibility in this, so if you have something urgent which requires to be considered as soon as possible then please contact us

Biography

Nicola Sturgeon was born in Irvine, Ayrshire in 1970. She was educated at Greenwood Academy, Irvine and Glasgow University where she studied Law and was awarded LLB (Hons) and Diploma in Legal Practice.

Before entering the Scottish Parliament she worked as a solicitor at the Drumchapel Law and Money Advice Centre in Glasgow.

Nicola was elected to the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and again in 2003, representing the Glasgow Region. She was elected as MSP for the Glasgow Govan constituency in 2007.

Nicola joined the Scottish National Party in 1986. She is a former Convenor of the Youth Wing and a former National Vice-Convenor for Youth Affairs. She has been a member of the National Executive since 1992. Since entering the Scottish Parliament in 1999, she has been the party's spokesperson on Education, Health & Community Care and Justice. In September 2004, she was elected Deputy Leader of the Scottish National Party.

In May 2007, Nicola was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, with responsibility for the NHS, health service reform, allied healthcare services, acute and primary services, performance, quality and improvement framework, health promotion, sport, public health, health improvement, pharmaceutical services, food safety and dentistry, community care, older people, mental health, learning disability, substance misuse, social inclusion, equalities, anti-poverty measures, housing and regeneration.

Nicola has appeared often on BBC. *Question Time* and on Radio 4's *Any Questions*. She wrote a weekly column for the Evening Times in Glasgow and is on the Advisory Board of the Holyrood magazine.

In November 2004, Nicola won the Donald Dewar Debater of the Year Award. In November 2008, Nicola won both the *Herald's* Scottish Politician of the Year Award, and also the Donald Dewar Debater of the Year, again.

Constituency postcode areas:

- all of G51 and G41
- some of G42 and G43
- very little of G5

Box Arrangements

Ms Sturgeon receives a box each evening and at the weekend. This usually leaves the office at 5pm. There may be flexibility in this, so if you have something urgent which requires to be considered as soon as possible then please contact us.

Please remember that we need a chance to process the document in the office so the box closes half an hour or so before it leaves us. When the box is going to be closing for a period of time, for example if the Cabinet Secretary is on leave, a note will be circulated across the Health and Wellbeing portfolio to confirm the arrangements.

Press Office and Special Advisors

For any engagement that Ms. Sturgeon 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 Health and Wellbeing are copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Advisers

It is important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions to the Cabinet Secretary and Ministers. Noel Dolan covers the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Kevin Pringle should be copied in when there are significant presentational aspects.

Official Attendance and Meetings

Ms Sturgeon does not always request an official's attendance at all engagements, but please be prepared to attend where required. It is also often useful to hear the Cabinet Secretary speak at an event to get a better understanding of her style and preferences and officials should try to do this as far as possible.

If an official cannot attend an event but would like to obtain feedback on a speech or briefing pack please feel free to get in touch with us.

Meetings

For formal meetings e.g. Cabinet where Ms Sturgeon will be, for example, introducing a paper, she finds it helpful to have introductory speaking notes in the form of short bullet points, together with suggested lines to take on topics which might be raised.

Freedom of Information legislation means it is now particularly important that an accurate note is taken of all ministerial meetings with external organisations. Ms Sturgeon's PS or APS will normally be at the meeting and will record any decisions taken by the Minister and any actions she agrees.

However, if there is likely to be technical or complex issues discussed it would be useful if the lead official identifies someone familiar with the subject area who can take a note. If this is likely to be the case, someone from Private Office will normally get in touch with the lead official ahead of the meeting.

Briefings for Events and Meetings

Ministers will know the basics - i.e. how many Health Boards there are in Scotland! So it is useful if briefing for events can cover the necessary logistics and then focus on topical issues and points of interest. From a media point of view, we should try to give the media a good illustration of the policy we are trying to highlight.

Good human interest stories are always a winner. It is also helpful to try to minimise the numbers of senior officials both from the Health Directorates and/or the Board accompanying the Minister. It's probably not a good use of very senior officials' time.

Please ensure that we have the full address (including postcode) of the place that the Cabinet Secretary is visiting at least four weeks in advance. This is required so that we can issue courtesy e-mails (constituency notifications) to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that Ms. Sturgeon will be in their constituency.

1. Format of briefing

Briefing for events should cover the following:

- **Purpose of the Visit**
- **Background of the visit** - including what the event is and details of when the Minister is expected to arrive and when he will be free to leave.
- **Venue details** - Please include the address and phone number of the venue, time and date of the visit and contact details (see bullet point below)
- **Contents of the briefing** e.g.

Annex A - Programme

Annex B - Speaking Notes (If appropriate)

Annex C - Attendees/CV's (If appropriate) - the Cabinet Secretary likes to know in advance who she is likely to meet so as much information on this as possible is appreciated.

Annex D - Q&A

- **Sensitivities** - If appropriate please highlight any potential sensitivities and anything controversial the Cabinet Secretary needs to know and is likely to be asked. It is not enough to put this into the main briefing although you can refer to an annex on the covering minute if appropriate.
- **Contact details** - of the main official and lead people who will meet the Minister on arrival and if appropriate contact details of the press officer who will be accompanying the Cabinet Secretary. In particular it is useful to provide a mobile number of the event organiser to allow contact to be made in the unfortunate event of the Cabinet Secretary running late.

Please be selective in the material you provide - do not be tempted to provide too much material if Ms Sturgeon is up to speed on an issue. You will be able to get a feel for the Cabinet Secretary's knowledge of an issue at the pre-meeting.

Briefing should be with this office within agreed timescales. We would generally require briefing from you **at least** two working days before an event but if we have not made you aware of deadline then please check. Please ensure that the briefing covers issues across the Government - people will raise points outside of the Health and Wellbeing portfolio and the Cabinet Secretary needs to be ready for this as far as possible.

Ministerial Correspondence

The bedrock is good written English. Answer the questions raised in the correspondence as fully as possible. Ensure you empathise with the correspondent; often Ministers receive draft correspondence in completely the wrong tone. We shouldn't pass the buck to Health Boards; we need to empathise with the concerns raised by the correspondent, state clearly where the primary responsibility lies, but this can be done without seeming to say it is not our problem.

Please ensure that all letters that come up for signature are checked in advance for correct formatting and spelling. We suggest that you always print off the letter before submission in order to check what it looks like on the page.

For Diary Cases, please make sure that along with the draft responses the correct diary template is always completed with as much information as possible. Ms Sturgeon uses this information to help her make decisions about attending events. As such, an explanation should accompany a grading of low/medium/high for presentation or policy value.

Ministerial Engagement Information

If an official is travelling separately, they should meet Ms Sturgeon on arrival and introduce her to the appropriate representatives of the organisation. Please also give us a note of the mobile number of the officials attending - it is best to include this in the briefing covering note.

The Cabinet Secretary travels to engagements in a Government Car and, unless the engagement is to last a long time and is in a central location, the car will remain at the venue until the Cabinet Secretary departs. As such, please arrange for a car parking space to be

available - Private Office can confirm car registration and any other details approximately one working day before the engagement.

When arranging tours of hospitals etc. it is recommended to keep the number of officials both internal and external to a minimum.

When arranging outside engagements, it is often helpful to inform your contacts that the Cabinet Secretary is likely to be accompanied by a member of her Private Office staff and, if appropriate, a press officer; both of whom usually travel with her. We are normally able to confirm who from Private Office and Press Office will attend on the Friday prior to the engagement.

Parliamentary Questions

Written Parliamentary Questions

The importance of accuracy cannot be over-emphasised. It is essential that Ministers do not mislead Parliament, either by omission or by design. Where information is received from third parties, it is essential to check and double check its accuracy. It is helpful to have more background information rather than less. Ministers are happy to take the decision about whether information should be included in the answer itself.

Oral Parliamentary Questions

The first question officials should be asking themselves is: what is the motivation behind the PQ. Why is this particular member asking this particular question? Usually a little bit of lateral thinking should point to the point that the member wishes to make in the follow up question - which is really what oral questions are all about. You should sense check the briefing that you are supplying for a question - don't provide briefing which focuses on a central belt issue if the member is from the Highlands.

When drafting an oral PQ, please pay particular attention to wording. It is difficult to read out answers that are too long or wordy. Complex quotes, tables and text in *italics* should also be avoided. **Answers should be no more than four or five lines long.** Any questions about these should be directed to the Private Secretary.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs. It is often the most obvious questions that are missed.

Where written PQs request information that is publicly available or has been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, the Cabinet Secretary is keen that the standard replies are used.

First Minister's Questions

Officials should keep up to speed on topical issues being reported in the press around their subject area and suggest briefing where they think it might be useful in terms of FMQs.

See further guidance on Parliamentary Questions. [Insert link](#)

Protocol Unit

Please contact Protocol Unit for guidance and advice that External Support Division could offer around Protocol issues, organising Ministerial events, meetings with UK Ministers etc.

And finally...

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. One of us is almost always available to assist in answering your queries and by asking first, time can often be saved later on in rectifying mistakes. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Health and Wellbeing portfolio who want to know what goes on in the Private Office

Speeches

It is essential that speeches have a good structure - they should be logical and coherent. Sentences should be shorter and it is important to tailor the speech to the audience. For example, it is fine to litter a speech with NHS acronyms if the audience is composed of NHS professionals and they are up to speed with these. However, if the audience is mostly lay people, then this would not be appropriate. Practice reading draft speeches out loud.

The preferred format for speeches is on A4 in Arial font, 18 pt, 1.5 spacing, Bold. Ms Sturgeon speaks at about 130 wpm. For Parliamentary debates, care should be taken to ensure the draft speech, and possible interventions, will not exceed the maximum time limits.

For Ministerial Statements or opening speeches, where there are likely to be many drafts until the final version, please ensure that when the document is updated it is re-named with the relevant date and time of change. Revisions should always be done in track changes mode. For engagements, please be aware that Ms Sturgeon may wish to add personal anecdotes on the day which has the potential to lengthen speaking time.

Please make sure that sentences and paragraphs are not split over page breaks and always number the pages. The Cabinet Secretary prefers short paragraphs and sentences. And please make sure that you carefully consider the type of audience that the Cabinet Secretary will be addressing.

Event organisers often ask for advance copies of the Cabinet Secretary's speech, for inclusion in delegate packs. They should direct this request to Private Office but as you will be in dialogue with them this request may come to you. We do not provide advance copies of speeches because the speaking note is unlikely to be a carbon copy of the address that Ms Sturgeon delivers on the day, as she often adds to the content off the cuff.

Private Office does not keep 'As Delivered' speeches but, if the Cabinet Secretary uses a PowerPoint presentation at the event, the organisers are welcome to a copy of the slides she used (without the coordinating speaking notes) after the event if they wish.

Submissions

Submissions are generally of a very high quality. Submissions should be concise but contain all the relevant information in order to allow Ministers to make a well-informed decision.

If you are sending up papers which Ms Sturgeon needs to see very urgently (within 12 hours), please phone us in advance.

If the submission has annexes it is usually easier if these are all put in order into one document, instead of separate documents for each part. The exception to this rule is when you are sending forward speaking notes and briefing for an event or when one of the annexes is a letter. It is helpful if the speaking notes or letter (on the correct template) can be sent forward as a separate word document.

Submissions

As the Cabinet Minister, Ms Sturgeon is ultimately responsible for all matters within the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Ms Robison and Mr. Matheson individually have lead responsibility for some of the portfolio. However there are some areas detailed above where the Cabinet Secretary and individual Minister have joint responsibility.

This means it is critical that both the Cabinet Secretary and lead Minister are involved in all aspects of policy development for these areas. To achieve these submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead Minister to **make a decision** should be submitted on a 1:2 basis as below:

1. Minister for Public Health/Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport
2. Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy

Where 1:2 submissions are used Private Office will collate both the Cabinet Secretary and Minister's responses and provide a single response to officials.

The portfolio split between Ms Sturgeon, Ms Robison and Mr. Matheson is included in this briefing note and where a topic is defined as a joint ministerial responsibility, submissions for a decision should be made on a 1:2 basis.

Submissions should not be used where a decision is not required.

Where submissions are being sent to lead Ministers as they have responsibility for a particular topic it is essential to copy the Cabinet Secretary in for information.

Please use the one page submission template wherever possible, ensuring that any financial implications and sensitivities are highlighted in the covering minute. All submissions should be copied to DG Health and relevant colleagues (including press and special advisors) as appropriate.

When offering a copy list in a draft minute it is helpful if you can provide full names - there are a number of Mr Smiths in the office!

Security Markings

Please make sure these are accurate and make clear what is in the public domain and what is not.

Purpose

In the 'Purpose' and 'Conclusion' sections please ensure that you make absolutely clear what is being asked of the Cabinet Secretary, or if the submission is for information only.

Timing

All submissions should be marked Immediate, Urgent or Routine and should have a target date which you wish to receive a response by. If there are specific issues which affect the timing for a response please clearly explain these.

Please ensure that any type of submission comes up with enough time to make amendments or to allow for further discussion, if necessary.

Proof Reading

More than any other action, checking spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response times. Nothing will undermine the Cabinet Secretary's confidence in a submission quicker than a poorly drafted and presented piece of work, As such, please ensure that all submissions (including MACCS letters and PQs) are clearly, coherently and consistently presented.

Shona Robison MSP,
Minister for Commonwealth Games & Sport

Responsibilities include:

- Sport
- Commonwealth Games
- Obesity etc including physical activity (copied to MM)

Box times

- Ms Robison receives papers (a box) most days during the Parliamentary session, box closure dates and times will vary depending on Ms Robison's diary - please contact Private Office to check.
- In recess the Minister will receive a box a couple of times a week.

Biography

Shona Robison was born in Redcar in 1966. Educated at Alva Academy, she went on to graduate from Glasgow University with a Social Sciences MA and Jordanhill College with a Postgraduate Certificate in Community Education. Previously she worked for Glasgow City Council's Social Work Department.

She was MSP for the North East from 1999-2003 and elected MSP for Dundee East in 2003. Latterly she was Shadow Minister for Health and Social Justice and a member of the Parliament's Health Committee before being appointed Minister for Public Health in the Scottish Government formed after the May 2007 election. In February 2009 she additionally took responsibility for the sport remit when she became Minister for Public Health and Sport. After the May 2011 election she became Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport.

She is married to Stewart Hosie MP, with a daughter and lives in Dundee.

Box Arrangements

Ms Robison receives papers (a box) most days during the Parliamentary session, box closure dates and times will vary depending on Ms Robison's diary - please contact Private Office to check. In recess the Minister will receive a box a couple of times a week.

DG Health will circulate a note informing the Directorate of Ms Robison's leave plans and final dates for getting papers and MACCS cases for the Minister's clearance.

Communications and Special Advisers

For any engagement that Ms Robison attends, early consideration should be given to the publicity requirements and photo opportunities. Close relations with the Communications team are essential, so please ensure that Communications Health and Wellbeing are copied into all submissions and briefing. Someone in the team should be consulted for all relevant MACCS diary cases to offer a view.

When drafting a Press Release, please ensure that you liaise with Communications Health. Language should be plain English, clear, accessible, avoiding jargon and unnecessary technical terminology.

SPADS

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions.

Noel Dolan is the Health Special Adviser. Geoff Aberdein is the main Sport SPAD. Kevin Pringle should also be copied in if there are significant media/presentational issues.

Ministerial Engagements and Meetings

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in the Minister's diary, a member of Private Office will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This e-mail will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required. Please note that the deadline is not arbitrary, it will depend on when the Minister has availability to see papers and how urgent the Minister requires the information. It will allow Private Office time before the event to make sure that all the logistical details work and the Minister's preferences are met and also allows time for the Minister to feed back any comments. Please contact Private Office if you are unable to meet the deadline as often we will have to make alternative arrangements to get papers to the Minister.

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

If the Minister is making a visit, Private Office will require the full postal address (including post code) four weeks in advance, to allow us to notify local MSPs and MPs that Ms Robison will be in their area.

Ms Robison prefers briefing to be in 'lines to take' and Q&A format. A pre-meeting is a good opportunity to check that Ms Robison is comfortable with the material and gives her the chance to request further specific briefing.

If a briefing pack has been sent to Private Office (eg for a debate) and there is further or amended briefing to come, this should just be sent individually. Time will have been spent flagging the original briefing pack for the Minister so there is no need to send a revised pack, just email instructions where we need to add or replace individual pages.

Engagements

Please use the engagement template for all engagement briefing. This will ensure that we have map (where necessary), postcodes, contact names and numbers. We can not stress enough that it is important that any official attending an event with the Minister should note their mobile number in the briefing, and have this phone switched on! This means that we or the Minister can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics. A member of Private Office and Communications Health usually attend external events with the Minister. It is useful if you let the organisers know this (having checked with both offices

first). When providing directions please contact Private Office to ascertain the starting point of the Minister's journey. Maps/directions are not required for well known buildings the Minister/Government Car Service drivers will visit regularly.

Meetings

Please note that when attending a meeting with the Minister it is the responsibility of the official to take a note of the meeting. Private Office ensure that any Ministerial actions are taken forward. It is useful to know in advance who will be taking the minute, and a draft meeting note (not circulated widely) should be with Private Office with three days of the meeting.

When you receive a meeting request from Private Office, please ensure you accept or decline and let us know if you are cascading the invitation further as space is often tight and this may not always be possible.

Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to Ministerial Reply correspondence. The Minister and Private Office appreciate the high quality of drafts that are received and the excellent stats that the Health Directorate have for processing MACCS cases.

Often it is the case that Private Office amend MACCS cases at our end, whether it be formatting, spelling or grammar before the Minister sees it. It is useful if you compare the scanned signed version with that which you originally sent up to Private Office - this will let you see what changes have been made and give you a better inkling of the Minister's style.

Please note preferences differ between Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and First Minister.

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	<p>MSPs - please 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>Constituents - 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>Email - 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>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary, to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about...."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please 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, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date.
Constituents	When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Ms Robison's constituents (Dundee City East) as the Minister 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response. • Please only enter the month and not the date as Ministerial availability will dictate when the letter can be signed and issued..
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. • If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 PO 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 Robison wants to accept invites that add value and fit in with the strategic purpose. • If a Private Office view is not indicated on the correspondence, please contact us to discuss this. • Responses should be in the Private Secretary's name, unless the correspondent is a politician, or the Private Office specifically say that Ms Robison 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
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	<p>should be for official replies only.</p> <p>Sample diary case responses</p> <p>Accept:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of XXXX inviting Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport to speak at your Annual Conference on XXXX.</p> <p>Ms Robison would be delighted to attend, subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you would contact Ms Robison's Diary Secretary at ministerforcommonwealthgamesandsport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk to confirm and make arrangements.</p> <p>Private Secretary</p> <p>Decline:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of XXXX inviting Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport to speak at your Annual Conference on XXXX.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Ms Robison is unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.</p> <p>Private Secretary</p>
<p>Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. children/young people. • Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. • 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...". • Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. • If a case is reallocated to Shona Robison for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise" should be used. • Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately". • 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". • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.

Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. • Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. • Please leave 5 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and her signature. • 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. • 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....." • Please 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. • Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals " SHONA ROBISON" • Text should be left aligned. 	
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. 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	SHONA ROBISON
	Letters for PS/Ms Robison's signature	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 Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.	
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please 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. 	

And 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 or pick up the phone. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Health and Wellbeing portfolio who want to know what goes on in Private Office.

Parliamentary Questions

When drafting an Oral PQ please pay attention to the wording. It is difficult to read out long wordy answers. Complex quotes and tables should be avoided. Answers should be no more than four - five lines long, simple and to the point.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting Oral PQs. Often, the most obvious questions are missed. **Supplementary Q & A should be in Arial size 16 - not in newspaper column format.** Make use of bold text to make key points stand out. Please also include positive key facts - this enables Ministers to rebut criticisms and turn questions into an opportunity to present policy favourably.

Please ensure that the drafter of the PQ or someone else familiar with subject is contactable on the Thursday the PQ is to be answered. Ms Robison may require last minute info.

The drafter of the PQ should also watch the Minister deliver the answer (or check the Official Report afterwards). This will let you see the Minister's style and also alert Private Office if an inaccuracy has been made that we need to correct.

Written 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. The Minister 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 DG Health.

Please don't put See Background Note to S3W-XXXX in a background note, it should be copied over for ease of reference.

Please refer to the Scottish Government instead of the Scottish Executive

Speeches

Ms Robison prefers full speaking notes in Arial size 16, 1.5 line spacing with a word count and 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.

Every speech should have a clear message to be communicated. It would be useful if the drafter of a speech sent a draft outline of the speech to the Minister prior to the pre-meeting. This gives the Minister time to consider whether she feels the speech hits the main points and messages she wishes to cover.

Ms Robison is comfortable doing Q&A after a speech providing she is comfortable with the subject area. This should be confirmed with Private Office.

Where the Minister 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.

Ministerial Submissions

All minutes to Ministers should have a clear purpose and conclusion. The Minister should be able to look at a submission and tell quickly from the Conclusion paragraph what she is required to do i.e. Agree, state that she is content, Note etc. Please note that the actual covering minute should **not** be more than two pages long.

Other useful points to note:

- Ensure that all relevant Ministers, DGs, Communications Teams and SPADS are copied in
- Remove all template comments
- Have correct timing - Routine (over 3 days) /Urgent (within 3 days but more than 24 hours)/Immediate (within 24 hours). Immediate Minutes should have IMMEDIATE in the subject box of the accompanying email and a courtesy phone call should be made to Private Office to alert us and also check that the Minister is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends. If you are sending something urgent or immediate out of hours please copy in the Private Secretary's personal email.
- Security Markings - should be accurate and reflect what is in the public domain and what is not.
- Please proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling. Remember also that the Minister may not always know what some abbreviations stand for - best to spell it out full at least once
- Submissions should be sent via e-mail in word format rather than objective links.
- When sending annexes please indicate in the covering e-mail how many pages in length each annex is. This avoids us causing paper jams on the Parliament printers during busy periods
- Please indicate in the covering email if there are any embedded documents included.

There is guidance on the intranet on preparing Minutes to Ministers, this should be adhered to as much as possible.

When sending a submission to one Health Minister, please ensure the other portfolio Cabinet Secretary or Minister is also copied in - either on a 1:2 basis or by side copy depending on the

split of responsibilities between Ms Sturgeon, Ms Robison and Mr Matheson (see top of this preference note for further details on this).

1.2 Submissions

As the Cabinet Minister, Ms Sturgeon is ultimately responsible for all matters within the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Ms Robison and Mr Matheson individually have lead responsibility for some of the portfolio. However, there are some areas detailed above where the Cabinet Secretary and individual Minister have joint responsibility. This means it is critical that both the Cabinet Secretary and lead Minister are involved in all aspects of policy development for these areas. To achieve this submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead Minister to **make a decision** should be submitted on a 1:2 basis as below:

1. Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport
2. Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing

Where 1:2 submissions are used Private Office will collate both the Cabinet Secretary and Minister's responses and provide a single response to officials.

The table above shows the portfolio split between Ms Sturgeon, Ms Robison and Mr Matheson. Where a topic is defined as a joint ministerial responsibility, submissions should be made on a 1:2 basis.

1:2 Submissions should not be used where a decision is not required

Ms Robison leads on Obesity but Mr Matheson must be copied into all submissions.

Ms Sturgeon leads on the Cities Strategy but Ms Robison must be copied into all submissions.

Mr Matheson leads on Health Promotion but Ms Robison must be copied into all submissions.

Please use the one page submission template wherever possible, ensuring that any financial implications and sensitivities are highlighted in the covering minute. All submissions should be copied to DG Health and relevant colleagues (including press and special advisers) as appropriate. When offering a copy list in a draft minute it is helpful if you can provide full names.

Michael Matheson MSP
Minister for Public Health

Responsibilities include:

- Public Health
- Health Protection
- Dentistry
- Healthy Working Lives
- Sexual Health
- Child & Maternal health
- Medical Records
- Adult Care and Support
- Drug Misuse (shared with Justice)
- Social inclusion

Box times

- Mr Matheson receives papers (a box) most days during the Parliamentary session.
- Box closure times will vary depending on Mr Matheson's diary - please contact Private Office to check.
- In recess the Minister will receive a box a couple of times a week.

Biography

Michael was elected as the MSP for Falkirk West following the May 2007 elections. Previous to that he was a Regional MSP for Central Scotland from 1999 - 2007.

He was born and educated in Glasgow. He went on to study at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh where he obtained a Bsc in Occupational Therapy. He also holds a BA and a Diploma in Applied Social Sciences from the Open University.

He is married to Susan and has 3 sons, Sean, James and Daniel.

Prior to becoming an MSP Michael practised as a Community Occupational Therapist with Stirling Council, Central Regional Council, and Highland Regional Council.

Away from politics, Michael is a keen mountaineer, which has taken him to the Western Himalayas and the Alps. He is also a member of the Ochil's Mountain Rescue Team, and enjoys running, mountain biking, ski-ing and football.

He has served on a range of Parliamentary Committee's including Health and Sport, Europe & External Relations, Justice and Enterprise and Culture.

Box arrangements

Mr Matheson receives papers (a box) most days during the Parliamentary session, box closure times will vary depending on Mr Matheson's diary - please contact Private Office to check. In recess the Minister will receive a box a couple of times a week.

DG Health/PO will circulate a note informing the Directorate of Mr Matheson's leave plans and final dates for getting papers and MACCS cases for the Minister's clearance.

Communications and Special Adviser

Press Office

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 Health and Wellbeing are copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Advisers

It is important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions to the Cabinet Secretary and Ministers. Noel Dolan covers the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Kevin Pringle should also be copied in when there are significant presentational aspects.

Briefings for Engagements and Meetings

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in the Minister's diary, Private Office will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This e-mail will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required.

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

If the Minister is making a visit, Private Office will require the full postal address (including post code) four weeks in advance, to allow us to notify local MSPs and MPs that Mr Matheson will be in their area.

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

If a briefing pack has been sent to Private Office (eg for a debate) and there is further or amended briefing to come, this should just be sent separately. Time will have been spent flagging the original briefing pack for the Minister so there is no need to send a revised pack, please just email instructions where we need to add or replace individual pages.]

Engagements

Please use the engagement template for all engagement briefing. This will ensure that we have a map (where necessary), postcodes, contact names and telephone numbers. We can not stress enough that it is important that any official attending an event with the Minister should note their mobile number in the briefing. This means that we or the Minister can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics. A member of Private Office and

Communications Health usually attend external events with the Minister. It is useful if you let the organisers know this (having checked with both offices first).

Meetings

Please note that when attending a meeting with the Minister 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.

Ministerial Correspondence

Address	<p>MSPs - please 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>All letters to MP's should also be directed to constituency office.</p> <p>Constituents - 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>Email - 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.</p>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's Diary Secretary. If the date of the event is flexible, please give the Minister's email address as contact details, as this reduces the amount of calls to PO.</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about...." • Please 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, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date.
Constituents	<p>When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Mr Matheson's constituents (Falkirk West) as the Minister requests Ministerial replies to all his constituents (see also Ministerial Replies below).</p>
Co-ordinated responses	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent.</p>
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response. • If you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, please

	<p>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 she sees it.</p>
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. • If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Cabinet Secretary within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Mr Matheson will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event.</p> <p>Mr Matheson does not like reference being made to recess as a reason for not attending an event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 PO 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 Mr Matheson 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 Mr Matheson knows the correspondent personally. <p>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.</p>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people. • Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. • 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

	<p>about...".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. • If a case is reallocated to Mr Matheson for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility" should be used. • Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately". • 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". • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. • Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. • Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and his signature. • 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. • 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....." • Please do not use paragraph numbering. • Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>> • Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals " MICHAEL MATHESON"
Ministerial Replies	Mr Matheson wishes to sign all letters to his constituents.
Official Replies	Please include "I have been asked by Mr Matheson to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.
Reallocation	GF's can be reallocated so that Mr Matheson 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 the Minister's signature

**MICHAEL
MATHESON**

	Letters for PS/Mr Matheson's signature	Private Secretary
Spelling	Please always use spell checker and proof read the response before forwarding to PO.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.	
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please 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. 	

Parliamentary Questions

ORAL PQs

When drafting an Oral PQ please pay attention to the wording. It is difficult to read out long wordy answers. Complex quotes and tables should be avoided. Answers should be no more than four - five lines long, simple and to the point.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting Oral PQs. Often, the most obvious questions are missed. **Supplementary Q & A should be in Arial size 16 - not in newspaper column format.** Make use of bold text to make key points stand out. Please also include positive key facts - this enables Ministers to rebut criticisms and turn questions into an opportunity to present policy favourably.

Please ensure that the drafter of the PQ or someone else familiar with subject is contactable on the Thursday the PQ is to be answered as Mr Matheson may require last minute info.

The drafter of the PQ should also watch the Minister deliver the answer (or check the Official Report afterwards). This will let you see the Minister's style and also alert Private Office if an inaccuracy has been made that we need to correct.

WRITTEN PQs

Mr Matheson 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. The Minister 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 DG Health.

Please don't put See Background Note to S3W-XXXX in a background note, it should be copied over for ease of reference.

Mr Matheson does not like references being made to not doing something for financial purpose, it should always refer to the policy reason.

Please refer to the Scottish Government instead of the Scottish Executive

Speeches

Mr Matheson prefers full speaking notes in Arial size 16, 1.5 line spacing with a word count and paragraphs not splitting over pages and pages numbered.

Speeches should be broken up into short paragraphs.

When changing topic to have sub headings.

Mr Matheson speaks at 120 words per minute.

Most speeches should be around 10 minutes.

When Mr Matheson is attending a event a full written speech is required.

When Mr Matheson is doing a speech in the Parliament bullet points are helpful.

Every speech should have a clear message to be communicated. It would be useful if a draft outline of the speech is sent to the Minister prior to the pre-meeting. This gives the Minister time to consider whether he feels the speech hits the main points and messages he wishes to cover.

Briefing packs for events should state whether the event is formal or informal.

Ministerial Submissions

All minutes to Ministers should have a clear purpose and conclusion. Mr Matheson likes them to be as brief as possible and to the point. The Minister should be able to look at a submission and tell quickly from the Conclusion paragraph what he is required to do i.e. Agree, state that he is content, Note etc. Please note that the actual covering minute should **not** be more than two pages long.

Other useful points to note:

- Ensure that all relevant Ministers, DGs. Communications Teams and SPADS are copied in
- Remove all template comments
- Have correct timing - Routine/Urgent/Immediate. Immediate Minutes should have IMMEDIATE in the subject box of the accompanying email and a courtesy phone call should be made to Private Office to alert us and also check that the Minister is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends

- Security Markings - should be accurate and reflect what is in the public domain and what is not.
- Please proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling. Remember also that the Minister may not know what some abbreviations stand for - best to spell it out full at least once
- Submissions should be sent via e-mail in word format. Please avoid sending objective links as it is difficult sometimes to know which version to print off
- When sending annexes please indicate in the covering e-mail how many pages in length each annex is. This avoids us causing paper jams on the Parliament printers during busy periods

There is guidance on the intranet on preparing Minutes to Ministers, this should be adhered to as much as possible.

When sending a submission to one Health Minister, please ensure the other portfolio Cabinet Secretary or Minister is also copied in - either on a 1:2 basis or by side copy depending on the split of responsibilities between Ms Sturgeon, Mr Matheson and Ms Robison (see top of this preference note for further details on this).

1:2 Submissions

As the Cabinet Minister, Ms Sturgeon is ultimately responsible for all matters within the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Mr Matheson and Ms Robison individually have lead responsibility for some of the portfolio. However, there are some areas detailed above where the Cabinet Secretary and individual Minister have joint responsibility. This means it is critical that both the Cabinet Secretary and lead Minister are involved in all aspects of policy development for these areas. To achieve this submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead Minister to **make a decision** should be submitted on a 1:2 basis as below:

1. Minister for Public Health
2. Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing & Cities Strategy

Where 1:2 submissions are used Private Office will collate both the Cabinet Secretary and Minister's responses and provide a single response to officials.

The table above shows the portfolio split between Ms Sturgeon, Ms Robison and Mr Matheson. Where a topic is defined as a joint ministerial responsibility, submissions should be made on a 1:2 basis.

1:2 Submissions should not be used where a decision is not required

Please use the one page submission template wherever possible, ensuring that any financial implications and sensitivities are highlighted in the covering minute. All submissions should be copied to DG Health and relevant colleagues (including press and special advisors) as appropriate. When offering a copy list in a draft minute it is helpful if you can provide full names - there are a number of Mr Smiths in the SG!

And finally

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. One of us is almost always available to assist in answering your queries and by asking first, time can often be saved later on in rectifying mistakes. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Health and Wellbeing portfolio who want to know what goes on in the Private Office.

John Swinney MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment & Sustainable Growth

Responsibilities include:

- Economy
- Employment
- Scottish Budget
- Budgetary Monitoring
- Public Sector Pay Policy
- Pensions Agency (SPPA)
- Public Service Reform and Delivery
- Efficient Government
- Simplification of the Public Sector Landscape/Public Bodies/Scrutiny
- Community Planning/Business Improvement Districts
- Community Business and Co-operative Development
- Third Sector and Social Economy
- Relocation

Box times

- Mr Swinney's box will close at 4 **pm each evening** (Monday - Wednesday) unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
- Mr Swinney will undertake constituency work each Friday, so where possible, all submissions for his weekend box should be sent up by **4pm on Thursday**.

Biography

Born in 1964, John Swinney MSP joined the Scottish National Party in 1979 and went on to graduate from Edinburgh University with an MA (Hons) in Politics. He has worked for the Scottish Coal Project, Development Options and Scottish Amicable.

Prior to his election as Westminster MP for North Tayside in 1997, he held a number of posts in the SNP at local and national level. In 1999, he became the MSP for Tayside North, remaining as the constituency's MP until standing down from Westminster at the 2001 General Election.

Having served as the SNP's Deputy Leader since 1998 and became Leader in 2000.

After relinquishing his post in 2004, Mr Swinney became Convener of the Scottish Parliament's European and External Relations Committee.

He was re-elected as an MSP at the 2007 Scottish Parliament election and appointed Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth. Following the elections to the Scottish Parliament in May 2011, He was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth.

John has three children and is married to Elizabeth Quigley. He lives near Blairgowrie in his constituency and his hobbies include cycling and hill walking.

Communications Team and Special Advisers

For any engagement that Mr Swinney attends, or announcement that he makes, early consideration should be given to any opportunities or sensitivities involved. Close liaison with the Wealthier and Fairer Communications team is essential and they should also be copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Adviser

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into submissions. Stephen Gethins is the Special Adviser attached to the Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth portfolio and should be copied into **all** submissions to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment & Sustainable Growth.

The Box Arrangements

- Mr Swinney's box will close at **4pm each evening** (Monday - Wednesday) unless circumstances dictate otherwise - in which case Private Office will issue an email indicating the alternative arrangements.
- Mr Swinney will undertake constituency work each Friday, so where practical and possible, all submissions for his weekend box should be sent up by **4pm on Thursday**.
- If you need to get urgent papers to Mr Swinney outside these times please contact Private Office in advance.

Key Points to Remember

- Where possible submissions and briefing for Mr Swinney should be kept brief and to the point.
- All emails should be sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth Mailbox copied to the Minister for Local Government and Planning/or Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism as appropriate. In addition please copy the email to Special Advisers, Communications FSG, DG Economy, DG Finance and Corporate Services and other officials as appropriate.

- Where possible please ensure that submissions are sent up with enough time for Mr Swinney to consider (usually 5 working days).

Submissions

- Mr Swinney prefers submissions to be short, to the point and not repetitive. List clearly and succinctly (preferably in one paragraph per issue) issues or background, including relevant facts and figures that Mr Swinney should be aware of, summarise the options available and set out concise conclusions or recommendations.
- Annex supplementary information - however, please keep this to an absolute minimum. If annexes or other supporting documents are large, please note the number of pages of each annex or document in the covering email (e.g. Annex A - 25 pages or Report on X - 45 pages).
- All submissions should note the official(s) name, directorate and contact number should the Private Office need any clarification or additional information. Where lines to take are listed, these must be cleared with Communications.
- It is important that submissions reflect the fact that there is a new Scottish Government - the Government's purpose of, 'creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth,' should be central to all pieces of work that the organisation undertakes.
- Please test core scripts, key messages and policy against the purpose and 5 strategic objectives of the Government. The five strategic objectives of: wealthier and fairer, healthier, safer and stronger, smarter and greener should be stressed where appropriate.

Meetings and Events

- Briefing packs should be kept as concise as possible. Mr Swinney does not like steering briefs and would prefer a list of key points to make if necessary.
- Mr Swinney appreciates officials accompanying him to meetings/events/Committee appearances, but asks that numbers are kept to an absolute minimum, specifically when external attendees are involved in meetings. Officials are requested to indicate, well in advance, who will accompany the Cabinet Secretary to each event.
- Mr Swinney has indicated that all internal meetings should be 30 minutes in length and external meetings are usually 40 minutes in length. Mr Swinney requests that meetings should not be unnecessarily lengthy. Please contact the Diary Manager if additional attendees need to be invited.
- Prior to any meetings, Mr Swinney's Private Office will agree with officials who should take a brief note and record action points at each meeting.
- Mr Swinney's Private Office will make contact with officials to arrange a pre-meeting on occasions where Mr Swinney feels that he requires an early discussion on a specific topic. Please arrive 15 minutes before external meetings in case Mr Swinney would like a brief chat before the meeting starts.

- For plaques, name badges and place settings, Mr Swinney should be referred to as John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth. When at external meetings / visits, Mr Swinney prefers to be addressed as Minister (by both officials and stakeholders).

Briefings

Briefing requests

- Mr Swinney's Diary Secretary will send out a briefing request at least 3 weeks in advance of the Cabinet Secretary attending an engagement. The Diary Secretary will also be your first point of contact on the engagement. If, for whatever reason, you find that you cannot make the allocated deadline then please let the Diary Secretary know well in advance.
- For engagements (including any speaking notes), briefing packs should be emailed to the Cabinet Secretary's Box **one week in advance** of the event, which will allow the Private Office time to check the material and request revisions or further material in good time for the event that it relates to.

Briefing Format

- Please submit briefing on the standard briefing template (available from Private Office on request).

<p>For Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an agenda which has been agreed with the people or organisation the Cabinet Secretary is meeting • Short biographies of key attendees • Succinct background to the issues (including key facts and figures) • Relevant lines to take cleared with Communications • Note of officials attending the meeting to support Mr Swinney <p>If Mr Swinney is chairing the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He finds a short annotated agenda helpful. The Cabinet Secretary is keen that briefing packs are not repetitive or unnecessarily lengthy.
<p>For Engagements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always include a postcode and an official's contact name and mobile number in the event of any unforeseen delays • Note the size and make up of the audience Mr Swinney is meeting / addressing • If appropriate, include a guest list or table plan, together with key biographies • Note to organisers that the Cabinet Secretary is likely to be accompanied by his PS and a Communications officer (please check with Communications if exact numbers/names are required) • The lead official organising an event should be prepared to attend the event to support the Cabinet Secretary • Please make it clear what speaking slot (if appropriate) the Cabinet Secretary has at the engagement, and who is speaking before and

	after Mr Swinney
For Committee appearances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is essential that the briefing pack is concise and easy to navigate with a contents page. <p>The briefing should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of recent PQs/debates/statements on the issue - highlighting the key issues. • Keys stats on the area the Committee are taking evidence on. • Recent press attention on the area the Committee are taking evidence on - what issues have been raised - what has the Scottish Government response been. • What are stakeholders saying in relation to the area the Committee are taking evidence on. • Financial issues. • Who will be appearing with Mr Swinney at the Committee session (please discuss attendance with Private Office). <p>Documents to include in the briefing pack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agenda for the Committee and the corresponding papers. • Any relevant correspondence with the Committee. • Copies of the Official Report for Committee meetings, debates, and statements.
For Parliamentary Debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is essential that the briefing pack is concise and easy to navigate with a contents page. • Brief summary of the main issue followed by bullet points and robust Q&A on specific topics identified by the Cabinet Secretary at pre-meeting • The Cabinet Secretary will be expected to make either an opening or closing speech or sometimes both. Usually, Mr Swinney will open a debate, with a portfolio Minister closing, but you should check with Private Office, who will also confirm the timings for the debate/statement. • Mr Swinney rarely requires a full closing speech, as the majority of the time is taken up responding to points in the debate. You should however provide some key bullet points that Mr Swinney should cover when winding up the debate

Correspondence

Please ensure that all correspondence is spell checked and proof read by another person before you submit to Private Office.

1.1.1 Cabinet Secretary (Green Folder) or PS Reply

- Mr Swinney will sign all letters to MPs, MSPs, Councillors, key people relevant to the Finance and Sustainable Growth portfolio and constituents.
- Mr Swinney will also personally sign thank you letters for meetings and visits he has undertaken. If a thank you letter is required in relation to an event that Mr Swinney has attended, it would be appreciated if a draft letter could be included as part of the briefing pack.
- In general, the Cabinet Secretary would like all of his letters to be as **straightforward, helpful, sympathetic and courteous** as possible, to avoid jargon, and be appropriate in tone to the correspondent. Even where the Scottish Government is not able to act in the given situation set out in correspondence, Mr Swinney has asked that **all letters are taken seriously and challenged against new Government priorities** - where appropriate, the five priorities of wealthier and fairer, healthier, safer and stronger, smarter and greener should be stressed.
- In the main, replies to other correspondence (excluding invitations) should be given an official reply. However, should the policy issue be particularly sensitive or unusual, you may prefer to draft a reply to issue from the Cabinet Secretary's Private Secretary. Please get in touch with Private Office for guidance if required.
- For the date, please insert month and year only, not the actual date. When nearing the end of the month, please date the response for the following month. If the reply is over 4 weeks past the date of the initial letter, please include an apology for the time it has taken to respond.
- Please ensure the Private Office deadline for All cases is fully considered, and is met on all occasions.

1.1.2 Invitations

- The Cabinet Secretary will be informed of all invitations he receives by the Private Office and prior to the case being added to MACCS may indicate whether he would like to undertake the engagement. However, Mr Swinney appreciates advice from officials when deciding whether to accept an engagement.
- Please liaise with the Communications Team, over whether an invitation should be accepted.
- Special Advisers may be referred to if officials wish advice, but it is not necessary to gain an opinion prior to the invite being sent via MACCS. As always, please do not hesitate to call the Private Office if you would like an initial steer from us.
- All invitations should be for Mr Swinney's Diary Secretary to sign.

1.1.3 Signatures

- Replies should be signed as follows (justified right of centre as on the letter template):

Letters for Cabinet Secretary's signature	JOHN SWINNEY
Letters for Private Secretary Signature	Private Secretary

Letters for Deputy Private Secretary signature	Deputy Private Secretary
Letters for Assistant Private Secretary signature	Assistant Private Secretary
Letters for Diary Secretary signature	Diary Secretary

Speeches

Please check with Private Office whether Mr Swinney will need a full text speech. He is usually comfortable with a couple of pages of key facts and key points to make in bullet point format, but Private Office will advise as necessary.

General points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Secretary speaks at approximately 160 words per minute • Preferred format for speeches is on A4 Tahoma, 14 pt, 1.5 spacing. Bold text should only be used to indicate emphasis • Ensure that sentences are kept short and are not split between pages • Number pages • Consider the type of audience that the Cabinet Secretary will be addressing and target the speech appropriately
Short Speeches/Speeches to External Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet points (short prompts only, not scripted bullets) • Please check with Private Office first to see whether Mr Swinney is comfortable with the topic that he is speaking on. If so, then he will only require some key bullet points to speak to and not a full speech. In areas where Mr Swinney is less comfortable with the subject matter, a full written speech will be required
Parliamentary Statements/Debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full text is required. • Allow time for Mr Swinney to take interventions or adlib.

Freedom Of Information Requests

DG Enterprise and Environment provides a weekly report to Mr Swinney of new FoI requests - please ensure that as soon as you receive a new FoI request that you log it on the FOI tracker. Mr Swinney will indicate whether he would like to see any FoI request before it is released.

- Please ensure you send FoI requests Mr Swinney wishes to see in advance or the deadline to allow time for clearance.
- If Mr Swinney does wish to see the case before it is released, please forward all the documents to be released to Private Office copying to DG Enterprise and Environment and Communications Wealthier and Fairer.

Parliamentary Questions

General

- The Cabinet Secretary's strong preference is for questions to receive a prompt and direct answer where possible. He has also indicated that he does not like answers that start with a direct "Yes" or "No" answer.

Oral PQs

- For oral questions, the first answer should be brief and answer the question being asked while taking the opportunity to positively reinforce the Government's position or progress in this area. The Cabinet Secretary also requires a robust Q&A for every oral PQ.

Inspired PQs

- IPQs need to be cleared by Mr Swinney. A submission proposing the draft question and answer should be sent to the Cabinet Secretary and copied to the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Chief Whip, First Minister and Parly Clerk Scotland. In addition the submission should invite Mr Swinney to indicate which MSP should ask the question. Please speak to the Parly Clerk or Private Office if you need any guidance on IPQs.

Fergus Ewing MSP
Minister for Energy, Enterprise & Tourism

Responsibilities include:

- Energy & Energy Consents
- Voluntary Sector & Social Economy
- National and Local Elections
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Scottish Enterprise
- Trade & Inward Investment (inc. SDI)
- Business & Industry inc manufacturing
- General Registers Office
- Registers of Scotland

Box times

- The closing time for Mr Ewing's box is generally 17:00 Monday to Wednesday and 16:30 on Thursday.

Mr Ewing leaves promptly to head back to his constituency on Thursdays so his Thursday box is treated as his weekend box and he would not normally be available to receive any papers on a Friday.

Biography

Mr Ewing was born in Glasgow in September 1957 and was educated at Edinburgh's Loretto School and then attended Glasgow University.

He was elected as MSP for Inverness East, Nairn & Lochaber in 1999 and re-elected in 2003 and 2007. Prior to being elected, he ran his own law practice and developed SNP policy on small business and other matters as well as serving on the party's national executive.

He has served on a number of Scottish Parliament committees including the Subordinate Legislation Committee, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Finance, Local Government and Transport committee and was previously Shadow Minister for Transport, Tourism & Telecommunications.

He is the son of Winnie, formerly the MSP for Highlands and Islands and MEP for Scotland, and brother of Annabelle, formerly MP for Perth.

A former member of the Lomond Mountain Rescue Team, Mr Ewing has climbed around two thirds of Scotland's Munroes. He was also a keen runner and has taken part in several marathons, including New York. He enjoys listening to jazz and playing the piano in his spare time.

Special Advisers

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into submissions. Stephen Gethins is the Special Adviser attached to the Finance and Sustainable Growth portfolio and should be copied into all submissions to the Cabinet.

Submissions

- Mr Ewing is keen to use the style of submission where the key issues are summarised on the first page and detailed information is included in annexes.
- It is helpful if you use the full names of officials on copy list rather than Mr X or Ms Y - this helps us make sure emails hit the right target.
- Cross portfolio or high profile issues can be sent on a one/two basis to ensure both Ministers have a chance to have their views reflected.
- Please ensure that submissions are clearly marked with their priority: **routine** (no sooner than 3 working days), **urgent** (within 3 working days) or **immediate** (within 24 hours). These should also be given a specific deadline for a response. It is also helpful to contact private office by phone to alert them to **immediate** submissions.

Timing: Please ensure that any type of submission comes up with enough time to make amendments or to allow for further discussion if necessary. Please remember that Mr Ewing is only in Parliament at certain times and we are not always able to get papers directly to him. If an immediate submission is unavoidable, it is very helpful to include an explanation for the delay. Mr Ewing is always particularly careful when taking decisions regarding the authorisation of spending of public money. He will often ask for additional information or analysis in these cases so please build that into your timescales for clearing submissions, where possible.

Proof Reading : More than any other action, checking spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response times. This includes the readability of the text and the formatting of any letters, particularly in relation to MACCS cases and PQs.

Briefing Format

It is vital that the Private Office has enough time to deal with briefing and speaking notes. Ideally speeches and briefing for engagements should arrive 5 clear working days in advance. It may seem like a long time in advance but it is necessary to enable us to make sure that the Minister has enough time to request redrafted speeches or additional briefing if required. It also allows time for Comms Wealthier & Fairer to consider any likely press involvement.

For Parliamentary debates and similar high profile events (where a lot of briefing is required) we would typically expect officials to prepare briefing which is clearly laid out to the Minister's requirements. All briefing should be available electronically. Private Office can add (or subtract) briefing notes as required.

Mr Ewing is keen that briefing for events is kept on the short side initially - we will ask for additional information if necessary. Hopefully this will save some time for officials preparing briefing packs too. The key points which the Minister wishes to be included are:

- Who are the key people? An attendee list to be provided
- A running order or agenda for the event
- Who the audience will be, has the Minister met them before? When?
- Any local politicians (what party)?
- Short background information on the organisation(s) involved
- Current issues
- Links to the legislative programme and priorities
- Hot issues and sensitivities

What Private Office Needs

PS Minute We can't emphasise enough how important this is! When briefing Mr Ewing for an event or meeting it is important to provide details in a covering submission:

- Time
- Place (full postal address including postcode)
- Programme/timings for the visit
- Name of who will meet the Minister when he arrives
- Official(s)/Press Officers who will be in attendance, along with their contact details on the day (mobile). This is very important if we are running late or are having problems locating the venue!
- Map and, where possible, contact details for the venue. It is also helpful to know if there is e.g. a particular entrance we should use.

Index: If a large briefing pack is necessary, it would be helpful if an index could be provided and the pages of briefing numbered to avoid having to tag each individual page.

Official Attendance: In general, Mr Ewing prefers to have an official in attendance at an event/engagement. Officials attend to brief the Minister, if the need arises, and to take any feedback to the Department. However, it also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise only talk to on the other end of a phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material; you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received at the event.

Thank you letters

Please remember that 'thank you' letters must be sent out no later than 3 days after the visit. Please ensure drafts are sent to the Minister in plenty of time for him to clear. Please refer to this example.

Correspondence

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	MSPs - please use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies
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	<p>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>Constituents - 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>Email - 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.</p>
Contact Details	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's Diary Secretary or email ministereet@scotland.gsi.gov.uk to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about..." • Please take particular care to 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, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date.
Constituents	When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Mr Ewing's constituents (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) as Mr Ewing requests Ministerial replies to all his 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response. • 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 Ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before he sees it.
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. • If the MCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
Invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All invitations addressed to Mr Ewing should be replied to by his Private Office, even if another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is to take on the engagement on his behalf (see also reallocation). If another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is going to undertake an engagement, the last paragraph should ask the correspondent to contact the relevant

	<p>Diary Secretary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it is true, especially if the event is some way off. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event. Diary responses can be very brief, unless there are specific arrangements or policy details that need to be included. Generic examples are suggested below: <p>DIARY ACCEPT</p> <p>"Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism to attend your XXXXXX.</p> <p>Mr Ewing would be delighted to accept your invitation. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary, or email ministereet@scotland.gsi.gov.uk to agree a mutually convenient date / make the necessary arrangements."</p> <p>DIARY DECLINE</p> <p>"Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing, Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism to attend your XXXXX on 1 April 2012.</p> <p>Unfortunately, on this occasion, Mr Ewing will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always draft two separate letters - one accepting and one declining the invitation - as well as a separate letter for any other possible answers, such as that another Minister will undertake the event. This should be done as a matter of course unless PO has indicated otherwise. Always include a completed PS diary template, including background details and advice from officials, press office and special advisers. Responses should be in the Private Secretary's name, unless the correspondent is a politician, or the Private Office specifically say that Mr Ewing 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.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people. Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. Please use the short phrase, "I have been asked to reply" in responses to letters received by another Cabinet Secretary/Minister but

	<p>reallocated to Mr Ewing for answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately". • 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". • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response or "I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful".
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. • Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. • Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and his signature. • 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. • 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....." • Please do not use paragraph numbering. • Always ensure the text is justified. • Date fields (month and year only) should remain on the left hand side indented by four spaces to allow the day's date to be hand written when the letter is signed. • Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>>
Ministerial Replies	Mr Ewing wishes to sign all letters from his constituents.
Official Replies	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.
Reallocation	GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Ewing 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 have been asked to reply".
Signature	Letters for the Minister's signature (centre aligned) FERGUS EWING
	Letters for PS/Mr Ewing's signature (centre aligned) Private Secretary
Spelling	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister 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/Chair, this should also be included.
	Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.
	Do not use Esquire after a name.

Parliamentary Questions

When drafting an oral PQ, please pay particular attention to wording. It is difficult to read out answers that are too long or wordy. Complex quotes, tables and text in Italics should also be avoided. Answers should be no more than four or five lines long.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs. It is often the most obvious questions that are missed. The supplementary questions and key facts should be in Arial, 16 point and 1.5 spacing.

When submitting a draft response please include previous PQs on the same subject (from any MSP) and relevant correspondence, particularly for oral questions. If the background note is helpful to more than one PQ it should be placed within the other relevant PQ's background note area. It is also helpful if copy of previous answers are included into the background note if a previous answer is mentioned in the question

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

Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answers should be deliverable orally rather than in 'written' form
Background Note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background should include any "intelligence" which might help the Minister understand what's being asked, and why. Reference should be made to recent correspondence and PQs (these should not be incorporated into the note itself but included separately; see below).
Past PQs and Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full PQ "pack" should include relevant past PQs and correspondence. Any previous PQs on same/related issues not only from the MSP who has submitted the Question but any others. Relevant correspondence on same/related issue from any MSP.
Key Facts/ Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any key facts/statistics should be listed in bullet point format on 1 page. This should be in an easily readable font size
Recent Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check with Comms Wealthier and Fairer for any recent media

Interest	interest in any related issues
Q&A Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure that this is in bullet point format (not in columns). • Spaced as per speaking notes to allow the Minister to read out if necessary. • Please allow a separate page per topic (where appropriate)

Speeches

Once a time and date for an event has been agreed, Kevin will request briefing and, where appropriate, a speaking note. Particular attention should be given to whether the event is major or minor and the potential media attention it may attract. This will determine whether a speech or a speaking note is required.

Speeches : For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required at least 1 week before the event to give the Minister time to read the speech and make changes if required. If Mr Ewing is giving a major speech, an outline is required 2 weeks beforehand and where possible a pre-brief will be arranged.

Speaking Notes : For minor or more informal speeches Mr Ewing will often deviate from his prepared text to insert anecdotes or personal observations. therefore, if there are key points that he is required to make it is worth identifying them as separate bullets.

Format : Once finalised, both speaking notes and speeches should be formatted in Font Arial, size 16 with 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, as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled.

Speaking Rate : Mr Ewing speaks at approximately 100 words per minute and paragraphs should be no more than 2 or 3 sentences long. Speeches should be no longer than 15-20 minutes. If a longer speaking slot has been requested by the event organiser it is worth suggesting that the Minister will speak for a shorter time but would be willing to take questions (please check this with Private Office first).

Content : Careful consideration should be given to the audience that the Minister will be addressing, so that the messages and language used are appropriate. Where possible, please include examples of things Mr Ewing has seen and done while in a Ministerial capacity. Involve Communications Wealthier and Fairer in drafting the speech and make use of the script and momentum story scripts which they hold.

Parliamentary Debate

Mr Ewing would be grateful if after every debate a short analysis of issues arising could be prepared. We would hope to get such a note within a week or so of the debate.

Aileen Campbell MSP
Minister for Local Government & Planning

Responsibilities include:

- Building Standards
- Planning
- Local Government

Box times

- Ms Campbell's box closes at **4.00pm Monday to Thursday**.
- Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. You will be notified, well in advance, of any changes.

Biography

Aileen Campbell, MSP for Clydesdale, was born in Perth on 18th May 1980. Aileen grew up on her parents' tenant farm and attended Collace primary school and Perth Academy before graduating with an MA joint honours degree in Politics with Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow.

She started a career in publishing by working as an editor for Keystone, a construction magazine, in 2003 and was an editorial assistant on the pro-independence newspaper, the Scottish Standard. Before her election to parliament, Aileen also worked for Nicola Sturgeon in 2005 and Shona Robison in 2006 as a Parliamentary Assistant.

Campbell was first elected to the Scottish Parliament on 3rd May 2007 as a list member for the South of Scotland. She was re-elected as the MSP for Clydesdale at the 5th May 2011 election and appointed to her present position.

She is married and lives in Biggar with her husband and her young son, Angus.

Minutes

When sending advice in the form of a minute to the Minister please ensure this is side copied to the Cabinet Secretary for awareness. The appropriate Director(s), the Business Management Unit, Communications colleagues and the relevant Special Advisers should also routinely be copied into minutes and any other correspondence that are sent to the Minister.

Please pay particular attention to the priority section of the minute:-

- Immediate - means that a response is needed within 24 hours
- Urgent - within three working days; and
- Routine - a response required no sooner than three working days from the date of the minute

All minutes should follow the standard format with a conclusion or recommendation at the end. Ideally, you should keep the minute to one page with supplementary

information contained in attached annexes. Copy lists should be at the very end of the minute, just before any annexes.

If there are additional papers relating to the minute it would be appreciated by Private Office if these could be attached separately to the covering e-mail. **Under no circumstances should these be embedded within the minute as they may be missed when papers are being printed.**

Briefing Format

Briefing and speaking notes for Ms Campbell should be with the Private Office one week in advance of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given - for major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance.

Please note that the deadlines which are set are there to ensure that Ms Campbell can consider briefings or speaking notes ahead of events and request further information she may require in advance of the event. This will cut down on the last minute requests for information which we have to make.

It is important to liaise with Communications colleagues in advance of any event.

Please use the attached briefing template for speeches or events. This should be at the start of the briefing pack. This sheet provides Ms Campbell and her Private Office, with key information for any event.

The following checklist may be useful on finalising and checking your briefing pack before sending to Private office.

The key points which the Minister wishes to be included are;

- who - she is meeting/who the key people are (including biogs)
- who - the audience - i.e., children, professionals, volunteers etc
- where - the event is taking place, including post code and location map
- why - i.e., does this stem from a submission, MACCS case etc
- what - background on what is being visited or the organisation being met
- when - date and time of event
- Suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- Relevant facts and figures/current issues and Q&A where appropriate
- Where Ms Campbell is chairing more formal meetings or groups, please provide a steering brief for her to use.
- Meeting Agenda / list of topics for discussion or Event running order
- Always consider whether a Press Release is appropriate.

Please ensure that the following points are taken into consideration when making up the briefing pack:

- Any papers we receive from organisations (i.e. guest lists) will have been sent to the lead official and should be incorporated into the briefing. If there are any changes to be made to the briefing, due to unforeseen errors or circumstances,

please e-mail a full clean version again if changes are throughout the pack, if changes are only in one or two attachments please only send the relevant pages. Regardless, please always indicate in the covering e-mail what changes have been made to which sections.

- Please let the **Diary Secretary** know in advance if there are any non-ailable documents coming forward. Please also ensure these are photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-ailable documents, please check with Private Office which address (i.e. - VQ or Parliament) the item should be sent to.
- You should 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, please contact the Private Secretary. You should find out, in particular if the Minister will be expected to take questions after a speech.
- Communications Wealthier and Fairer should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. **Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.**
- An address, a map of the location and contact number is essential. For external visits, you should provide a contact number and **full address and postcode** for the venue since we need to inform the local MSP/MP when a Minister will be visiting their constituency.
- Please advise in the briefing which officials will be accompanying the Minister and provide their mobile number. Not only does the Minister/Private Secretary require this information for their own use, but we may also need to inform organisers how many people will attend an event.
- If a speech is being provided it should **ALWAYS be Annex A**. The cover sheet of the briefing pack should note that the speech is Annex A, however, the speech itself should **ALWAYS** be sent as a **separate word document**. This is for ease of amending or e-mailing it to the official report if a speech is for a debate for example.
- If the Minister is launching a new report; or responding to a report or drawing heavily on a publication during a speech please ensure that a hard copy (or electronic one if you do not have a hard copy) is included with the briefing.
- Include a list of who the Minister will meet at the engagement and what position they hold and their biographies. If possible, please also advise on who they should try to speak to.
- If organising a day of events, please 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.
- When providing briefing that includes annexes, please list all annexes in the covering note.
- Plaques for Ms Campbell should read "Aileen Campbell MSP, Minister for Local Government and Planning"
- Ms Campbell has asked that draft thank you letters are provided on the Minister's letter template for visits and engagements. Please keep letters short and friendly with space allowed for the Minister to write in her own personal

note.

- If an event is BLACK TIE or anything other than lounge suit, please make Private Office aware as soon as you realise. If Private Office are already aware of this, you will be able to tell as it will be noted in the title of the diary entry.
- For more informal speeches under 5 minutes in length (i.e. - receptions), in addition to the full speaking note, one page of bullet point speaking notes should be provided outlining the main points which needs to be covered.

Official attendance

A policy official should usually always be in attendance at events/engagements. Officials attend to introduce the Minister to key/relevant attendees; brief the Minister, if the need arises; and to note any follow-up action. It also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise only talk to on the other end of the phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material; you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received or how the Q&As have gone at the event.

Diary

The diary becomes heavily committed very quickly and it is helpful if dates for routine/recurring meetings can be scheduled as far in advance as possible as it may not always be feasible to accommodate requests at short notice. A selection of dates can be held provisionally until a date is finalised.

We are happy to provide advice on the Minister's availability for engagements, although the Minister will always wish to see formal advice from officials on the merits of her attendance/participation in events before considering whether or not to accept an invitation.

Any invitation being accepted for a Wednesday or Thursday during the Parliamentary Session should always include a caveat about acceptance being '**subject to being excused from Parliamentary Business**'.

When an event is entered in the diary, the lead action officer and other relevant officials are sent a diary entry requesting briefing. It is the responsibility of the lead official to check the correct venue and timings have been entered and if they discover that the event timings are incorrect or if they change (even marginally) following the request, from what is entered in the Ministerial diary, they should inform Private Office of the change immediately as this can have a knock on effect re. timings of other engagements in the Ministerial diary and effect car bookings etc.

Speeches

For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required 1 week before the event to give the Minister enough time to read the speech and make any necessary changes if required.

Ms Campbell speaks at approximately 150 words per minute and requests that approx 10% of her speaking time is left free to allow her to take interventions/add anecdotes

for Parliamentary Debates.

Please use the attached briefing template for speeches or events. This should be at the start of the briefing pack. This sheet provides Ms Campbell, and her Private Office, with key information for any event.

The template in the briefing pack should be followed immediately by the speaking note or speech.

Speaking Notes:

Ariel Font 16, 1.5 Line spacing should be used. 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**, as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled. Please include 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.

- Speeches should **ALWAYS be Annex A**. The cover sheet of the briefing pack should note that the speech is Annex A, however, the speech itself should **ALWAYS** be sent as a **separate word document**. This is for ease of amending or e-mailing it to the official report if a speech is for debate for example.
- Please put the title of the speech within the header along with the annex reference and page number. Please do not manually type in the page number as this affects the numbering of the pages if paragraphs are added or removed. Please instead use the 'insert page number' icon.
- Please **add the word count and speaking time into the footer**.

The Top tips on writing a speech for Ms Campbell

Know the audience

- What do they expect to hear from the Minister?
- How long will they expect her to speak for?
- Is the speech appropriate to the audience e.g. Professionals, Children?
- Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?
- Will the audience be familiar with any acronyms used?

Consult widely to improve relevance

- Think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up to date position possible on these (consulting with Comms team where necessary)
- Add as much context as possible to show an understanding of 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 - the Minister will add anecdotes etc as appropriate

Please test drive your speech on colleagues

- Whilst it may read well it might not deliver well when spoken.

Correspondence

Please find below a note of the Minister's preferences for correspondence and diary cases:

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	<p>MSPs - Use the reply address provided on the original letter, this is NOT 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 ALWAYS check this.</p> <p>Constituents - 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.</p> <p>Anyone who sends their request by e-mail rather than by Royal Mail should receive their response by e-mail. Please complete the name and address section of the reply as normal but underneath please put</p> <p>By email to: XXX correspondent e-mail address XXX</p>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary to discuss arrangements.</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent. • Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked. • Always include a PS/Minute.
Co-ordinated responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that all facts and figures are consistent and up to date.
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response is >6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. • If the MACCS case is not sent up to PO within the deadline,

	<p>please 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 Campbell for signature.</p>
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
Invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please phone the Diary Secretary for a private office view of the Minister's availability to attend events to get an early steer. • An accept and decline letter should be provided for all diary cases unless you are advised otherwise by the Private Office. • Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice and the views of Communications team if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits etc). • Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people. • Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. • Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. • Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. • Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and signature. • 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. • Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft.
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Minister wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSPs • MPs • MEPs • Members of the House of Lords • Elected Council Members • Chairman/Chief Executive of Portfolio related bodies/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisations Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents (Clydesdale) Parliamentary candidates Other key stakeholders <p>The Private Secretary should sign all other correspondence. If in doubt please contact Private Office.</p>
Official Replies	Please include "I have been asked by Ms Campbell to thank you for your letter of dd/month and to reply on her behalf" or a similar form of words.
Reallocation	GFs can be reallocated so that Ms Campbell is answering on behalf of another Minister 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".

Signature	Letters for the Minister's signature	AILEEN CAMPBELL
	Letters for PS/Ms Campbell's signature	Private Secretary
Spelling	Please ALWAYS use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and changes as necessary.	
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please 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 Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included. Do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does. 	

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 as follows:

- Answers should be clear and concise - and for Oral answers, 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. Where cross referring to 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'. And the question being referred to and its background note should be included in the background note of the question being answered.

- Q & 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 & 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 PO of whom) to attend the pre-brief which normally takes place on a Tuesday or Wednesday AM.
- 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 the Minister has any last minute queries. Officials should also watch questions in case there is any follow up action required.

Mike Russell MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning

Responsibilities include:

- Curriculum for Excellence
- Qualifications & Assessment
- School Improvement
- Teachers
- Support for Learning
- Children, Early Years and Social Care, including related Asylum issues
- Skills and Employability
- Further and Higher Education
- Adult Education
- Science policy and strategy development

Box times

- Mr Russell's box closes at **4pm on Monday to Thursday**. The Minister's last box of the week closes at **4pm on Thursday** evenings. The Minister lives in Argyll and is in his constituency on a Friday so this is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.

Biography

Michael Russell was born in Bromley, Kent, in 1953 and brought up in his father's home town of Troon where he attended Marr College. A graduate of Edinburgh University, from 1974 to 1992 he worked in a variety of media sectors and in a variety of places including Edinburgh, the Western Isles, Inverness and Glasgow.

He joined the Scottish National Party in 1974 and held a number of senior party posts before becoming the party's first full time Chief Executive in 1994. Mr Russell was the campaign manager for Alex Salmond's leadership campaign in 1990 and he contested the SNP leadership in 2004.

He was elected to the Scottish Parliament in 1999 as a Regional Member for the South of Scotland, was a founding member of the Parliamentary Bureau and then served as Shadow Minister for Children, Education and Culture. He won 'Debater of the Year' award in 2000 and was short listed for 'Scottish Politician of the Year' title in 2002.

Mr Russell lost his seat in 2003 and returned to a media career but was re-elected for the same region in 2007 when he was appointed Minister for Environment.

He was Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution, with responsibility for the National Conversation and the White Paper Your Scotland, Your Voice, from February until December 2009 when he was appointed Education Secretary.

He is the author of seven books including one novel, has one son and lives with his wife in rural Argyll.

Box Arrangements

Mr Russell's box closes at **4pm on Monday to Thursday**. The Minister's last box of the week closes at **4pm on Thursday** evenings. The Minister lives in Argyll and is in his constituency on a Friday so this is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.

If you are unable to meet this deadline please phone Private Office to discuss options. Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. You will be notified, well in advance, of any changes.

The Minister will generally clear papers quickly once he has them, though if he is presented with an important policy paper he likes to keep a hold of it for a few days to consider properly. Please account for this and try to get any such important papers to us as early as possible.

Briefing and Speaking Notes

Briefing - Ministerial Priorities:

1. Use the attached template.
2. Submit speeches/briefing as early as possible for Mr Russell to consider ahead of events
3. Consider the size of any briefing and focus on key points for a concise briefing for usability - remember Private Office will provide a core briefing pack for the Minister so event briefing should be as concise as possible and focussed on anything specific to the event
4. Contact with Communications and consideration of political and media interest

Speaking Notes - Ministerial Priorities:

1. Consider the audience when writing a speech, whether it is an academic audience, practitioners or young people etc.
2. Ensure you have had an opportunity to look at the exemplars when preparing a speech for Mr Russell.
3. For Events and meetings Mr Russell requires short bullet points focussing on key issues. He will elaborate on these points on the day. **Do not write the speech in full**. Parliamentary Statements and Debate Speeches **should** be written out in full. Private Office will arrange a pre meeting 1 week before to go over the draft speech, so please factor this into your drafting timescales
4. Talk to experienced colleagues if you would like a view on the flow and style of a speech, such as the intelligence unit or go through your business managers if you do not know anyone individually. Mr Russell believes that speeches should not be too long and focus on the key aspects of what needs to be said.

5. Mark any section of a speaking note if it is essential that it is delivered as written. Mr Russell likes to add his own style and comments to the paragraphs that are worked up for a speech and will not deliver an address verbatim.

NB: Please submit the speech as **a separate Word document** so Mr Russell can clear the speaking note in advance of the event.

Briefing and Speaking Notes - Additional Information

Briefing and speaking notes for Mr Russell should be with the Private Office one week in advance of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given - for major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance.

Please note that the deadlines which are set are there to ensure that Mr Russell can consider briefings or speaking notes ahead of events and request further information he may require in advance of the event.

If you are sending up a revision to an element of the briefing pack please send up a fresh clean copy of the pack. This ensures that the correct version goes into Mr Russell and helps us manage his papers more effectively.

The key points which the Cabinet Secretary wishes to be included are:

- details of whom the Cabinet Secretary is meeting/who the key people are
- who the audience will be
- suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- relevant facts and figures/current issues
- where Mr Russell is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use
- running order
- always consider whether a Press Release is appropriate

Please use the attached covering sheet for speeches or events. This should be at the start of the briefing pack. This sheet provides Mr Russell and his Private Office, with key information for any event.

Briefing for speeches and events should include:

- covering sheet
- speaking note (it would also be helpful to have the speaking note attached separately to the briefing). **Please number pages of all speaking notes.**
- agenda
- a map
- postcode (required for car bookings and constituency letters)
- contact name and number (**mobile**) of supporting official and the meeting point
- note of attendees (external and SG officials) and their designations, in alphabetical order
- guest list or seating plan (if appropriate)
- any info re. current issues/lines to take

- please feel free to include Q&A if certain questions are likely to come up.

Please ensure that the following points are taken into consideration when making up the briefing pack:

- Please let the Assistant Private Secretary or Diary Secretary know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents coming forward. Please also ensure these are photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, please check with Private Office where they should be sent.
- You should 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. You should also check whether there is anything which the Minister wishes to discuss himself. If anything is unclear or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, contact Private Office. You should find out, in particular if the Cabinet Secretary will be expected to take questions after a speech.
- Communications should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. **Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.**

Mr Russell will often ad lib during speeches and generally prefers to have short paragraphs or bullet points that he can embellish with his own style rather than a fully worked up speech to be delivered word for word. The Minister will often set the scene for a speech by adding his own anecdotes so the bare facts laid out clearly and in **short** sentences are generally all that is needed e.g. two pages max of short bullet points should suffice for a reception.

Format/Style for Speaking Notes

The Minister's preferred layout for all speaking notes is as follows:

- Font Arial (Size 16)
- Line Spacing 1½ space (two spaces between paragraphs)

Page breaks should occur only at the end of a full sentence, and a paragraph should not be split over two pages. All pages should be numbered as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as apposed to stapled. A word count should also be included at the end of each speech.

Speaking Rate

As a rough guide, the Minister speaks at a rate of 180 words per minute. When providing speeches for debates time for interventions should be taken into account.

In advance of delivering any speech the Minister always likes to see a guest list in order to check if other MSPs or other dignitaries are in attendance, so he can acknowledge their attendance. Please keep this in mind and flag if you can in the draft speaking notes.

The Minister also prefers to speak from a lectern, so officials should ensure that one is provided at events where Mr Russell is speaking.

Correspondence

Mr Russell's Ministerial Priorities

1. Be as polite and as helpful as possible in any response
2. Use plain language and avoid abbreviations
3. Ensure any correspondence is spell checked before submission

NB: To make Allen's life easier, please ensure that the MICHAEL RUSSELL sign off is in block capitals and the month of the letter is set down and indented to allow the Cabinet Secretary to handwrite the date - it would be much appreciated!

Additional Guidance

Ministerial Correspondence plays an important part in communicating the Minister's key policy priorities. It is therefore important that care and attention is taken when preparing a response for the Minister's consideration. When putting forward a draft reply to the Minister please ensure that the response always answers the points raised in the original correspondence. If appropriate provide a covering PS/Minute to give further background for the Minister.

When dealing with a diary case **Communications colleagues should be consulted as the norm** on the merits of each invitation/meeting request received. It's simply impossible for the Minister to accept every invitation/meeting request he receives therefore it is important that officials consider thoroughly the merits of each request.

If recommending acceptance of an invitation/meeting request this should be approved at Deputy Director level before being put forward to the Minister for consideration.

As per the guidance please consult Comms on MACCS and diary cases but not for private meetings where this advice is not required.

It is also helpful for Comms to be consulted at the end of the advice process so that Comms colleagues can consider all the information.

Due to periods of media pressure it would be really appreciated if Comms advice is only sought during the following hours:

10.00-17.00 Mon-Thurs

10.00-15.00 Friday

Please note do not call Comms colleagues during FM questions which occur between 12.00-12.30 on Thursdays.

Correspondence Sign Off

Ministerial correspondence will either be signed off by the Minister himself or his Private Secretary. When the Minister is signing off a letter his name should be in bold and capitals in the centre of the page.

MICHAEL RUSSELL

When Ministerial correspondence is for Private Secretary sign off the following should be used:

Private Secretary

Proof Reading

More than any other action, checking spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response time. This includes the readability of the text and the formatting of letters. Other key points to check when proof reading are as follows:

- Include Designations/Awards in address field i.e. Mr Joe Bloggs OBE, Chairman. These are not always picked up by Correspondence Unit - cross refer with original correspondence
- Correspondence Unit Reference - i.e. 2009/000000 should be included on all letters that are put forward - sometimes missed off
- Always refer to date of correspondent's original letter/e-mail and nature of correspondence
- If response is late always include an apology in draft reply
- If original correspondence has been sent to another Minister and has been passed to Mr Russell for response due to portfolio responsibility, make this clear in the draft response
- Paragraphs should not cross over a page
- The Minister will respond to letters from constituents; MPs; MSPs; MEPs; Councillors; Chairs/Chief Executives of portfolio related bodies

If you have to use acronyms in briefing, speaking notes or answers to Parliamentary Questions (PQs) or correspondence, please ensure you spell out initially exactly what the acronym stands for.

Ministerial Correspondence - diary cases and letters

Address	MSPs - please 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. Constituents - 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.
Contact Details	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary to discuss

	arrangements.
Content	<p>Please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent.</p> <p>Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.</p> <p>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.</p>
Co-ordinated responses	Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that all facts and figures are consistent.
Date	<p>Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.</p> <p>Include the month and year in any letter for signature.</p>
Delays	<p>If the response is more than 6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</p> <p>If the MACCS case is not sent up to within the PO deadline, please 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 Mr Russell for signature.</p>
Diary cases and invitations	<p>Please phone the Cabinet Secretary's Diary Secretary for a private office view of availability in the Minister's diary. Generally Mr Russell has constituency commitments every alternate Monday and all day on a Friday and these times should be avoided.</p> <p>All diary cases should be made for the Cabinet Secretary's Private Secretary's signature unless stated otherwise on the MACCS case notes. In acceptance letters please ask stakeholders to contact the Minister's Dairy Secretary to firm up arrangements.</p> <p>All diary cases should provide with an accept and decline letter unless you are advised otherwise by the Private Office.</p> <p>Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice and the Communications team.</p> <p>Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Cabinet Secretary is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.</p> <p>In addition, if you are proposing an accept, you must get a view from the ELL Comms desk and include this in the PS minute.</p>
Font	The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
Language	<p>Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.</p> <p>Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood.</p> <p>Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.</p>

Layout	<p>Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so.</p> <p>Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.</p> <p>Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and signature.</p> <p>Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft.</p>	
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Cabinet Secretary wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · MSPs · MPs · MEPs · Members of the House of Lords · Elected Council Members · Chairman of Fringe Bodies · Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents · Key stakeholders 	
Official Replies	<p>Please include "I have been asked by Mr Russell to thank you for your letter of dd/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.</p>	
Proof Reading	<p>Always proof read and spell check letters before they come up for the Minister's or Private Office signature.</p>	
Reallocation	<p>GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Russell 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 simply include the words, "I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio".</p>	
Signature	Letters for the Cabinet Secretary's signature	MICHAEL RUSSELL
	Letters for PS/Cab Sec ELL's signature	Private Secretary
	Letters for the APS/Cab Sec ELL's signature	Assistant Private Secretary
	Letters for the Correspondence Secretary/Cab Sec ELL's signature	Correspondence Secretary
	Letters for the Diary Secretary/Cab Sec ELL's signature	Diary Secretary
Timing	<p>Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Cabinet Secretary 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Cabinet Secretary as soon as possible as this</p>	

	allows extra time for discussion, clarification and changes as necessary.	
Titles	<p>Please include the full title of the correspondent eg Director/Chairman/Convener.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does.</p>	

Events & Official Attendance

Mr Russell's Ministerial Priorities

1. Mr Russell likes to have policy support at Ministerial events and private office must be informed if there are any issues with providing official support.
2. Keep briefing concise and tailored to the event e.g. light for receptions, more detail for conferences etc.
3. Provide up to date mobile contact numbers on briefing to ensure you can be updated on any issues on the day of the event.

Additional Guidance

Officials attend to brief the Cabinet Secretary, if the need arises, and to take any feedback to Directorates. It also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise have only talked to on the other end of the phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material; you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received or how the Q&As have gone at the event.

When arranging outside engagements, it is often helpful to inform your contacts that the Minister is likely to be accompanied by his Private Secretary, and if appropriate a Communications Officer, both of whom often travel with the Minister.

The Minister prefers briefing that is short and to the point. Please be selective in the material you provide - do not over-brief if the Minister is up to speed on an issue.

If you have to use acronyms in briefing, speaking notes or answers to Parliamentary Questions (PQs) or correspondence, please ensure you spell out initially exactly what the acronym stands for.

Thank You Letters

After official visits/engagements the Minister likes to write to the hosts/organisers thanking them for inviting him to their event, and for their hospitality etc. It would therefore be extremely helpful if officials as a matter of course could provide the Minister with a draft thank you letter as soon as possible after events.

Meetings

Meetings - Mr Russell's Ministerial priorities

1. Ensure that you arrive in plenty of time for meetings, particularly at Parliament as getting through security can be problematic.
2. Private Office need to know exactly who is coming to each Ministerial meeting so that the room size/catering etc is accurate, please keep the diary secretary informed.
3. The Cabinet Secretary likes steering briefs to be clear, with all referenced papers attached for his information and analysis for before and during the meetings.

NB: It is useful to know when people need to be signed into Parliament and when they have their own Parliamentary passes.

It is helpful for Private Office to know which officials are attending meetings to ensure an appropriate room is booked. Please ensure you accept meeting requests and give suggestions for other attendees to Private Office as early as possible. If there are any changes to the attendees please let the Diary Secretary know.

Please arrive around fifteen minutes early for meetings with the Cabinet Secretary to allow internal meetings to start earlier if time allows and to allow time for a discussion with the Cabinet Secretary before external meeting (even if a pre meeting has already taken place).

Cabinet Meetings

Cabinet takes place every Tuesday afternoon and it is important to make sure Mr Russell is briefed appropriately for each session. Private Office will commission all SCANCE items by Friday morning each week. In general, Mr Russell does **not** require a Speaking Note - the paragraph provided for SCANCE paper will suffice unless Private Office advises otherwise. This provides Mr Russell with the opportunity to consider them overnight and ask early on Tuesday for any supplementary material he requires ahead of Cabinet, Mr Russell does not clear SCANCE so please ensure that all SCANCE contributions are cleared by the appropriate Deputy Director.

Speaking notes for Cabinet: the Cabinet Secretary likes bulleted speaking notes which feature the most salient points contained either in the SCANCE paper or a Cabinet paper itself. The **format** should be : **Ariel Font 11, single Line spacing.**

Should you feel that background information would be appropriate you can include this following the bullets but this should be kept to a minimum.

Please note that any material Mr Russell requires for Cabinet is often needed at very short notice.

Parliamentary Business

Parliamentary Debates - Mr Russell's Ministerial Priorities

1. The Cabinet Secretary likes to have a discussion prior to debates in order to sketch out his thoughts to supporting policy officials that will be drafting his speaking notes and providing briefing.
2. Mr Russell likes to have information fed to him on a frequent basis during debates and it is recommended that his briefing pack is kept concise but that more detailed information is taken to the chamber box to be supplied as required in response to points raised and comments made. It is also recommended that a team of officials supports whenever possible, each concentrating on specific areas of the topic for debate in order to help responsiveness. The size of the team will vary depending on the complexity and breadth of the topic.
3. Please provide a summary following the debate that draws out the key points and comments made.

Mr Russell takes his parliamentary responsibilities seriously and therefore it is important that he is fully prepared for business in the Chamber or in Committee. Please note that for all parliamentary activity a pre meeting will be arranged. Private Office will advise you on the timings of these.

Additional Guidance

As noted in the priorities above, always ensure that at the beginning and end of a speech that the length of time allocated is clearly visible. Summary of debate exchanges should be prepared following a debate in which Mr Russell has participated. This should cover the main themes of the debate and the ideas discussed by the key speakers during the debate. This will act as a useful reminder to Mr Russell of the debate should he need it for future engagements or parliamentary business and should hopefully provide you and colleagues with a flavour of the debate should you not be able to watch the debate.

Committee Appearances

Mr Russell's Ministerial Priorities

1. Please provide key facts summary sheets that distil the top line information of each section of the briefing pack and 1 overall key points summary sheet at the beginning of the pack.
2. A pre-brief must involve the officials attending the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary.
3. An action point discussion with Mr Russell immediately after the meeting should always take place.

In addition a short opening statement prepared for the start of the Committee session to set the tone and context of his appearance should be prepared. This should be no more than 5 minutes long.

Mr Russell likes official support to be available at his Committee appearances and if you are unsure who should attend please contact the Private Secretary or our CLO.

Please ensure that you also include the following information in the briefing pack:

- the agenda for the Committee session that day
- any other pieces of information or papers which are relevant such as a Bill or financial memorandum

Parliamentary Questions

Mr Russell's Ministerial Priorities

1. Be polite and as helpful as possible in any response that must answer the question raised and reflects the Government position.
2. Answers should always be as concise as possible.
3. If there is any uncertainty as to how to approach a particular topic, please consult Special Advisers.

Oral Questions

When drafting an oral PQ, please pay particular attention to wording. It is difficult to read out answers that are too long or wordy. Complex quotes, tables and text in italics should also be avoided. Answers should be no more than four or five lines long.

Q&A for orals should be set out across the full width of the page, with the answer directly below it rather than the traditional Q & A column format. Contact details for the lead official should always be provided in the background note of an oral question.

When the Minister has Oral Questions officials should always be available on the morning of questions, especially directly before the question session starts just in case the Minister has any last minute queries. Officials should also try to watch questions just in case there is any follow up action required.

Inspired PQs

Mr Russell, like every Minister, uses Inspired PQs to make announcements to Parliament.

You need to submit a minute to seek clearance for your IPQ. The submission should set out:

- the reasons for recommending the inspired PQ route
- the text of the proposed question and answer
- the timescale for Ministers to clear the draft question and answer (allowing Parliamentary Clerk at least 2 days to arrange for the question to be tabled and answered)
- the draft text of any associated press release

- the preferred date and time for the PQ to be answered (especially if linked to a launch event or press release)
- details of any existing PQs on the same subject, including Opposition PQs, which should be answered on the same day as the inspired PQ.

Please remember to copy the Parly Clerk's office into each stage of the IPQ drafting process and that **you no longer** need to gain the agreement the First Minister before the question can be tabled.

It would be helpful if a submission could be provided for the Minister with the suggestion of which MSP will be tabling the IPQ in advance of tabling please.

If you need any further information on procedure please contact Parly Clerks office who will be happy to advise further.

Submissions

General Submissions

Mr Russell's Ministerial priorities are:

1. Be as concise as possible when submitting papers for information and decision to Mr Russell.
2. Always provide a summary if the submission is more than 3-4 pages long.
3. When providing tight deadlines for Ministerial turnaround, please provide an explanation for Mr Russell's information.

Additional Guidance

Submissions for Mr Russell should be typed on the submissions template. The font should be Arial 12pt.

Timing should be marked Immediate, Urgent, Routine or For Info. If there is a specific deadline this should also be mentioned in the timing field. As a guide Immediate requires a response that day or within 24 hours of receipt; Urgent requires an answer within 3 days and Routine covers the longer timescales. For Routine submissions it is always helpful to state what timescale you are working to.

Where possible the covering minute should be no more than one or two pages long clearly outlining the key points and decisions required from Mr Russell.

All recommendations; decisions required and conclusions should be typed in **Bold**.

Annexes should be marked A, B, C etc and should also have appropriate titles.

For submissions that are to be approved by the Cabinet Secretary and sent on to others please provide an electronic copy list.

Please do not copy submissions to external contacts at the same time as the Minister. If the minutes have to be sent to external contacts please send these separately.

Please don't put any embedded documents within submissions that you send to Private Office - they can cause delays in hardware performance.

When sending Objective links, please include a Word version of the document as well - as there can be access issues.

Emails to accompany submissions

When sending up a submission to Mr Russell please provide a clear title in the subject line of the email as appropriate (i.e. with a description of what is contained within the email).

In the body of the email please indicate the timing of the minute; which Minister is required to take a decision or is the lead Minister and the subject matter.

Issuing documents by email

When issuing documents by email, in particular externally, please ensure that you have gone into the document to accept all track changes and saved it as new. Whilst an attachment may look 'clean' on your screen before issue, all amendments and their history will be shown on the recipient's computer if they have track changes automatically switched on. This can be potentially embarrassing if the document has contained anything confidential or been significantly amended.

Top Tips and Advice

We are grateful for the support we get from all our colleagues across Education and Lifelong Learning - from MCS cases to providing assistance at stakeholder meetings. Below are a few of the more regular, minor issues we encounter and it would be really appreciated if you could bear them in mind across the range of issues we deal with day to day.

And Finally

We are here to support to provide as much assistance as we can to you so please do not hesitate to give any of us a call.

If you would find it helpful to learn more about the work we do in Private Office we are always happy to come to divisional meetings and answer questions. Alternatively work shadowing opportunities are available - just ask.

All of the ELL Private Office team appreciate your support and attention to these preferences and hopefully we have covered most matters but if there is anything else we can assist with feel free to contact anyone in the team.

Angela Constance MSP
Minister for Children & Young People

Responsibilities include:

- Workforce and service delivery issues (Social work and children's services)
- Children – universal provision (eg early Education and childcare)
- Early Years / Early Intervention
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Child protection

Box Arrangements

Please contact Private Office regarding Ms Constance's Box Times.

Biography

Angela Constance has been a member of the Scottish Parliament for the Livingston Constituency since May 2007. Prior to her election she served for 10 years as a Councillor in West Lothian, serving on the Graduation and Lifelong Learning Committee (1997-2007).

Ms Constance was also a qualified Social Worker specialising in Mental Health and Wellbeing with offenders. Her career in Social Work included positions within HMP & YOI Glenochil, HMP Perth and The State Hospital, Casters. She was a qualified Mental Health Officer and Practice teacher.

Ms Constance was educated at the University of Glasgow, West Lothian College and University of Stirling respectively. Her first elected position was as President of Glasgow University Student's Representatives Council (1991-92).

Ms Constance is married with one son and lives in West Lothian, the county where she was born and grew up attending local schools.

Submissions

Submissions to Ms Constance should be used to inform her of any issue on which she needs to make a decision, to inform her of policy developments and to invite her to participate in Scottish Government official events. When preparing a submission for Ms Constance, it would be helpful to consider the following:

Q. Have I used the right template?

Submissions for Ms Constance should be typed on the submissions template. The font should be Arial 12pt.

All information held in minutes to Ministers should be assessed for releasability at the point at which an FOI request is made. The FOI Unit should always be consulted when information held in a minute to Ministers is the subject of an FOI request and is being considered for exemption or release.

Material which is likely to be considered exempt from disclosure (subject to application of the public interest test) includes internal advice to Ministers/the workings of Cabinet or its Sub-Committees or Groups (or the preparation of such advice), communication between Ministers and issues which might substantially prejudice relations with the UK Government. However it is most likely that there will be requests for factual information on which decisions have been based. To allow for quick assessment on the releasability of material in the future, it is good practice for minutes to Ministers to clearly separate information which is publishable, or may be released on request (such as factual information and data upon which decisions have been made, and the analysis which has been carried out on that data), from information which is likely to be considered to be exempt from release (such as the content of advice to Ministers and Cabinet, matters relating to staff, or confidential information).

This template provides a guide to the preparation of minutes to Ministers, taking account of the need for this separation. Annex A should be used for advice to Ministers and Cabinet, staffing issues and confidential information that is likely to be considered exempt from release - an appropriate protective marking should be used - see note 2). Annex B should be used for background information that is likely to be considered releasable (factual information, and data and analysis carried out on that data);

It is essential that the First Minister is kept fully informed across the range of Executive business so that he can engage in any issue where he considers it appropriate. The First Minister should be copied into all minutes conveying advice on significant or sensitive policy issues, developments or announcements.

This restricted annex, and the factual background annex attached, both allow for the inclusion of policy proofing, options and financial implications. FOI may require that the factual information on which decisions are made be released, but generally protects discussion of options, budgets, commercial or other sensitive information which forms the basis of advice to Ministers. Divisions will need to exercise careful judgement, within the terms of FOI guidance available, as to what is included in each annex.

Q. Have I used the correct priority marking?

Timing should be marked as follows -

Immediate - if response needed within 24 hours

Routine - if response needed within three working days

For Info - if response needed no sooner than three working days

If there is a specific deadline this should also be mentioned in the timing field.

Q. Are my recommendations and/or conclusions typed in **bold**?

Q. Have I accurately marked any annexes (A,B,C etc) and given them appropriate titles?

Please Remember:

- Where possible the covering minute should be no more than one page long clearly outlining the key points and decisions required from Ms Constance.
- Please do not include PQs, letters, press releases or embedded files within submissions.
- For submissions that are to be approved by the Minister and sent on to others it would be helpful to provide an electronic copy list.
- Please note that Private Office does not use ERDM. Please ensure that you send us Word copies of any documents you would like us to consider and not Objective links.

Briefing for Events and Meetings

Producing accurate, detailed briefing for events and meetings is vitally important as your briefing papers are the key documents Ministers use to prepare. When drafting briefing for meetings and events, please ensure that you have covered the following points:

Q .Have I used the right template?

Briefing for events should always be submitted with the covering sheet.

Ms Constance would like briefing for meetings to be submitted in this format. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact private Office to discuss.

Q. What is the deadline for briefing?

Briefing and speaking notes for Ms Constance should be with the Private Office **no later** than one week in advance of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given. Meeting this deadline is important as Ms Constance needs to have the time to review your briefing and come back to officials with any questions he has. The later your briefing is, the less time the Minister has to review it. **If you are not going to meet this deadline for any reason, it is your responsibility to let Private Office know at the earliest opportunity.**

Q. Have I liaised with Press Office?

It is vital to liaise with Communications colleagues in advance of any event to ensure that an appropriate handling strategy is devised, and to give Press Office enough to notice to decide if a Press Officer is needed on the day. Communications Team should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.

Q. Have I spoken to Private Office about the possibility of a pre-brief?

If you feel strongly that it would be beneficial for the Minister to have a pre-brief prior to a specific engagement, please contact the Minister's Private Secretary to discuss. We cannot

guarantee that we will always be time to accommodate requests, but we will try our best to help.

Q. Have I contacted the event / meeting organiser?

You should always contact the event / meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like the Minister to do, or what they would like to discuss (if a formal meeting), 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 as soon as possible. You should find out, in particular if the Minister will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions **after a speech. If he will, please make sure that you inform Private Office immediately.**

Q. Does my briefing pack contain the following information?

- Biographies of the key people that the Minister will meet and details of any other key people at the event (eg, Directors of Education etc). It would be helpful if details of Councillors' political background could be included for information.
- Rough composition of the audience (eg teachers, young people, councillors etc). Approximate numbers would also be helpful.
- Suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- Relevant facts and figures/current issues
- Running order
- An address (**including postcode**), map of location and contact number of venue and lead official - these are **essential**.
- Where Ms Constance is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use. Private Office can provide examples of steering briefs on request.

Q. Have I taken into account any documents from Private Office?

All papers we have received in relation to an event will have been sent to you and should be incorporated into the briefing. Please let Ms Constance's Diary Secretary, Steven Turnbull, know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents coming forward. Please also ensure these are photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, please check with Private Office where they should be sent as our time is split between Victoria Quay and the Parliament.

Q. I've submitted my briefing but some of the details have now changed. What should I do?

If there are any changes to be made to the briefing, due to unforeseen errors or circumstances, it is very helpful to provide Private Office with a full clean document again, via e-mail, (with covering note clearly explaining where the changes have been made) instead of pointing out the error or adding a separate sheet to the briefing. Similarly, if any circumstances change and it is too late to submit a revised briefing, please call the Minister's Private Secretary to let

her know at the earliest opportunity. This is preferable to letting the Minister know on arrival at the event.

At an Event - Official Attendance

Ms Constance prefers to have an official present at engagements. Please advise in your briefing which official(s) will be accompanying the Minister and provide their mobile number (s).

Officials attend to brief the Minister if the need arises and to take any feedback to the Directorate. Can you therefore, please ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when the Minister arrives. Please make yourself known immediately to the Minister and / or Private Secretary.

Attendance also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may have otherwise only talked to on the other end of the phone. Given that you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material, you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received at the event.

After the Event

Once an external event has been undertaken Ms Constance has asked that a letter of thanks be drafted for his signature. Where possible, it would be helpful if this could be submitted along with the briefing. If not, please submit letters as soon as possible after the event.

The importance of Post Codes

For external visits, you should provide a contact number and full address and postcode for the venue. We need this to enable us to inform the local MSP/MP when a Minister will be visiting their constituency and the Government Car Service rely on a postcode to locate a venue.

If organising a day of events, please 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.

Speeches

The Minister places great importance on the quality of his speeches and wants to ensure that they are interesting and relevant to the audience. We realise that writing a speech can often be a daunting task, and hope that following tips will be of use to you.

Q. What will the deadline be for my draft speech to be sent to Private Office?

For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required in Private Office **no later** than 1 week before the event to give the Minister enough time to read the speech and make the necessary changes if required.

For major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance. If you feel your event may fall into this category, please seek guidance from Private Office at the earliest possible opportunity.

For more informal or short speeches, the Minister prefers a short speaking note of bullet points. (But using full sentences, not abbreviated, so that he can read them out loud if necessary). If you are thinking of providing speaking notes in this format, please consult Private Office in the first instance and we can let you know if we think this format will be suitable.

Q .Have I asked the event organisers how long they would like the Minister to speak for?

Please always discuss with organisers the length of time that will be allocated to the Minister to speak. Generally we would not expect Ms Constance to speak for any longer than 20 minutes and would do so only in exceptional circumstances. Please try and aim for having the Minister speaking for around 10 minutes maximum as a rule. This however, depends on the type of event so if you are at all unsure, please call Ms Constance's Private Secretary to discuss.

Q. Have I checked if there will be a lectern on stage?

Ms Constance generally prefers to speak in front of a lectern, but if one will not be available, please let us know as soon as possible as this will often have an impact on the type of speaking note required.

Top tips on writing a speech for Ms Constance

1. Know the audience

What do they expect to hear from the Minister?

How long will they expect him to speak for?

Use plain English that illustrates and paints a clear picture.

Is the speech appropriate to the audience? **This is vitally important.** If Ms Constance is speaking to an audience of school children, please do not provide a speech that is top heavy with policy information, this is not appropriate to the audience.

Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?

Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?

2. 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 Press 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.

Use references to real people and real issues, if relevant.

3. 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 - the Minister will add anecdotes, jokes etc as appropriate. Add relevant humour if available.

4. Format

Ariel 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 at the bottom right hand corner, as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled. Please include word count at the end of each speech and ensure that sections of the speech are separated using subject headings where appropriate.

5. Submission

When submitting a speech to Ms Constance's office, please send it through as a separate document from your briefing. Ms Constance prefers her briefing to be printed single sided and his speeches to be single sided. By sending them up separately, you are helping us to prepare Ms Constance's folder quickly and accurately.

6. Speaking Rate

Ms Constance speaks at 130 words per minute. Minus 20% for Parliamentary debates to allow for interventions. When preparing a closing speech for a debate please provide Mr Brown with a strong opening and closing paragraph along with bullet points covering relevant points for the middle section of the speech.

7. Structure

A rough guide on how to prepare a 10 minute speech for Ms Constance follows. Please, where possible, follow this structure and amend it appropriately for shorter speeches. If in doubt, please don't hesitate to contact Private office - we're here to help!

Introduction - 1 minute

· Try to connect with the audience - praise the host or say something about the location

Beginning - 1- 2 minutes

· Try to grab the audience's attention - use a headline, joke, quote, anecdote, has Ms Constance met the group/organisers/host before? Please do not agonise over trying to make the speech funny, Ms Constance will add personal anecdotes where appropriate.

Middle - 7- 9 minutes

· Aim for no more than three key messages in your speech. When deciding on these key messages, please take into consideration the audience and the key policy messages that they would like to hear. Please consult widely across the Scottish Government to ensure that your key messages are relevant, accurate and up to date.

End - 1 - 2 minutes

· Re-cap on the main points and aim for a strong finish, saving the best lines for last.

8. Questions

Ms Constance is occasionally asked 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 Constance should not take questions. If it is suitable to take questions, please ensure that you inform Private Office at the earliest opportunity and that your briefing includes a note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to be raised and relevant lines to take.

Correspondence

Please find below a note of the Minister's preferences for Green Folders (GFs) and other general correspondence:

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference: Address	MSPs - please 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. Constituents - 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.	
Contact Details	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's Diary Secretary to discuss arrangements.	
Content	Please ensure that responses are as helpful as possible and answer the points raised by the correspondent. Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked. 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.	
Co-ordinated responses	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures given in responses are consistent.</p> <p>Where a letter touches on more than once policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials. This helps to ensure that we are presenting a fully informed, joined up picture of the Government and ensures that the answer given by the Minister is as robust as possible.</p>	
Date	<p>Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.</p> <p>To save time it would be helpful if the month and year were not included in any letter for signature. This will be added by Private Office the day the letter issues.</p>	
Delays	<p>Please make every effort possible to ensure that all MACCS cases are sent to Private Office within the set timescales. If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.</p> <p>If the response is >6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</p>	
Font	The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.	
Invitations	<p>All diary cases should be made for the Private Secretary's signature unless advised otherwise.</p> <p>All diary cases should be provided with an accept and decline letter unless you are advised otherwise by the Private Office.</p> <p>Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice and advice from the Communications team if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits etc).</p> <p>Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.</p>	

Language	Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.	
Layout	Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so.	
<p>Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Minister's folder in Microsoft Word.</p> <p>Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and signature.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft.</p>		
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Minister wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <p>MSPs</p> <p>MPs</p> <p>MEPs</p> <p>Members of the House of Lords</p> <p>Elected Council Members</p> <p>Chairman of Fringe Bodies</p>	

	Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents Parliamentary candidates	
Official Replies	Please include "Thank you for your letter of dd/month to the Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning regarding / inviting him to / I have been asked to respond" or a similar form of words.	
Reallocation	GFs can be reallocated so that Ms Constance 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 simply include the words, "I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio".	
Signature	Ensure the Minister's name is in bold and uppercase	ANGELA CONSTANCE
Letters for PS/Mr Brown's signature (use bold and uppercase)	PRIVATE SECRETARY	
Spelling	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and changes as necessary.	
Titles	Please 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 Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included. Do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does.	

Parliamentary Questions

Please note that the Presiding Officer has requested that all answers to oral PQs are kept as brief as possible. Please bear this in mind when preparing answers to oral PQs for Ms Constance and consider carefully what really needs to be in the main answer, and what could reasonably be put into the background note. As a general rule, answers should only be around four or five lines long.

Please keep answers simple, straightforward and to the point. Please include a background note where appropriate. Complex quotes, tables and text in italics should also be avoided.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs - it is often the most obvious questions that are missed.

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

The Minister has asked that officials consider carefully any recent media coverage on the subject of PQs that he is being asked to answer and make reference to the coverage, and lines to take, in the answer.

The Minister also prefers his background briefing for supplementary questions to be in Q&A format.

E-mails and Language

When issuing documents by email, in particular externally, please ensure that you have accessed the document and accepted all track changes and saved it as new. Whilst an attachment may look 'clean' on your screen before issue, all amendments and their history will be shown on the recipient's computer if they have track changes automatically switched on. This can be potentially embarrassing if the document has contained anything confidential or been significantly amended. Documents being sent outside the organisation should always be in PDF format. This ensures that no changes can be made to it post issue.

Alasdair Allan MSP
Minister for Learning & Skills

Responsibilities include:

- Gaelic and Scots
- Modern Languages and Scottish Studies
- Set up of SEQIA
- Sponsorship of SQA
- Behaviour, bullying
- Skills Strategy, Non-advanced vocational skills, policy and delivery

Box Times

- The closing time for getting papers to the Minister is generally 17:00 Tuesday to Thursday.
- The Minister has agreed that any papers he receives by the Thursday deadline will be cleared or commented on by him before the weekend. There will be no Ministerial Box issued over the weekend due to logistical issues within the constituency (Western Isles of Scotland)

Biography

Alasdair Allan has been an SNP MSP since May 2007 representing the constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar.

Alasdair gained a PhD in Scots Language from Aberdeen University in 1998, and before that attended Glasgow University. Previous to becoming an MSP, Alasdair was senior media relations officer for the Church of Scotland. He regularly wrote Gaelic columns in various newspapers and was named Gaelic journalist of the year in 2006. In addition he was also the National Secretary of the SNP from 2003 to 2006 before he resigned to fight the Western Isles seat.

Alasdair originally comes from Ashkirk, near Selkirk in the Scottish Borders. He is a fluent speaker of Gaelic.

Outside of politics Alasdair sings with the Back District Gaelic Choir in Lewis, with whom he competes in the National Mod.

Box Arrangements

The closing time for getting papers to the Minister is generally 17:00 Tuesday to Thursday.

The Minister has agreed that any papers he receives by the Thursday deadline will be

cleared or commented on by him before the weekend. There will be no Ministerial Box issued over the weekend due to logistical issues within the constituency (Western Isles of Scotland).

If you have something urgent that has to go in the Minister'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.

The Minister's weekly working pattern is usually:

- Monday -Constituency (based in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis)
- Tuesday - Parliament (this is the best day for any external engagements)
- Wednesday - Parliament (engagements subject to Parliamentary Business)
- Thursday - Parliament (engagements 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 of Scotland, it is unlikely the Minister will accept engagements in his Ministerial capacity on those days.

Communications Team and Special Advisers

Communications Directorate

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

Special Advisers

Special Advisers should also be copied into all submissions and briefing. David Hutchison is the Special Adviser who covers the Education angles relating to policy issues, communications and media interest.

Speeches

Once a time and date for an event has been agreed, the Diary Secretary will request briefing and, where appropriate, a speaking note. Particular attention should be given to whether the event is major or minor and the potential media attention it may attract. This will determine whether a speech or a speaking note is required.

Formal speeches (eg. an announcement, conference, debate or launch) will require a draft at least 1 week before the event to allow the Minister time to read the speech and make changes if required.

For formal engagements, the Minister prefers his speeches in full sentences. The context of the gathering is key. If it is an informal few words after a dinner engagement, please do not spend too much time on the briefing or the speech as the

Minister is likely to just speak "off the cuff". A few bullet points on the key messages to get across will suffice.

Annex A shows the covering sheet which should be completed as a covering note when providing any speech (same as briefing template). It also provides an example of a complete briefing paper.

The following points should be used in preparing a speech for the Minister:

- Format: Both speaking notes and speeches should be formatted in Arial, size 16 with 1.5 line spacing.
- 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).
- Pages should be numbered (middle of footer), as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled.
- A word count at the end of each speech should also be included.
- Speaking rate: The Minister speaks at 150 words per minute. Minus 20% for Parliamentary debates to allow for interventions.
- Q&A: The Minister prefers to deliver speeches no greater than 10 minutes, followed by a "Question and Answer" session with the audience, if appropriate. Even if a Q&A session is not indicated on the programme, briefing should be included for this, including any strong reasons why the Minister should not take questions. A note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to be raised is also helpful. The Top Tips on writing a speech for the Minister

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 the Minister?
- How long will they expect him to speak for?
- Is the speech appropriate to the audience e.g. school children?
- Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?

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 - the Minister will add anecdotes, jokes etc. as appropriate

It is usually best to forward the speech to the Minister as early as possible. The Minister will then amend it himself to final form, if appropriate, checking that officials are content with the content of the final speech.

Briefings

Briefing and speaking notes for the Minister should be with the Private Office **one week in advance of the engagement**, unless a specific date has been given - for major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance. It is important to liaise with Communications colleagues and Special Advisers in advance of any event.

In any engagement the Minister undertakes, he is keen that the briefing targets the correct audience. The Minister likes to know the mix of people that he will be meeting and/or addressing, particularly any sensitive issues pertaining to them or special needs they may have.

Covering Sheet: [Annex A](#) contains an example of the covering sheet which should be used for all briefing. It contains these 10 key subjects:

- Date and time of engagement
- Where
- Key message
- Who
- Why
- Official support required
- Media handling
- Dress code
- Greeting party and specific meeting point on arrival (if event is at a non-SG building)
- Specific entrance for Ministerial car/ parking arrangements

Please ensure that the following points are taken into consideration when making up the briefing pack:

- Details of whom the Minister is meeting/who the key people are?
- Who the audience will be
- Suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- Relevant facts and figures/current issues
- Where the Minister is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use.
- Running order
- All papers we have received on the event will have been sent by you and will be incorporated into the briefing. If there are any changes to be made to the briefing, due to unforeseen errors or circumstances, it is very helpful to Private Office to e-mail a full, clean document again (with covering note to explain) instead of pointing out the error or adding a separate sheet to the briefing.
- Please let the Diary/Correspondence Secretary know in advance if there are any documents coming forward by hard copy. Before sending hard documents, please check with Private Office where they should be sent (i.e. VQ or Parliament).
- You should 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 Private Office. You should find out, in particular if the Minister will be expected to take questions after a speech.
- Communications should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. **Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.**
- Please advise in the briefing which officials will be accompanying the Minister **and provide their mobile number**. Not only does the Minister/Private Secretary require this information for their own use, but we may also need to inform organisers how many people will attend an event.
- Include a list of who the Minister will meet at the engagement and what position they hold and their biographies. If possible, please also advise on who they should try to speak to.
- If organising a day of events, please 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.
- If a large briefing pack is necessary, it would be helpful if an index could be provided

and the pages of briefing numbered to avoid having to tag each individual page.

- When providing briefing that includes annexes, please list all annexes in the covering note.
- A map and, where possible, contact details for the venue should also be provided.
- It would be helpful if details of Councillors' political background could be included for information.
- The Minister has asked that draft thank you letters are provided on the Minister for Learning and Skills letter template for visits and engagements, especially early learning institutions including nurseries. Please keep letters short and friendly with space allowed for the Minister to write in his own personal note.

Official Attendance: In general, the Minister likes to have an Official in attendance at an event/engagement. Officials attend to brief the Minister, if the need arises, and to return and feedback to the Directorate.

This also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise only talk to on the other end of the phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material, you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received at the event.

Ministerial Correspondence

Please find below a note of the Minister's preferences for green folders and other general correspondence:

Address	<p>MSPs - please 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.</p> <p>Constituents - 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.</p>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary, to discuss arrangements.</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Please 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, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and

	<p>figures are up to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Always include a PS/Minute.
Co-ordinated responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, News Releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent.
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response. · To save time it would be helpful if the month and year were not included in any letter for signature. This will be added by Private Office the day the letter issues.
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If the response is more than 6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. · If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The main text of the letter should always be Ariel, font size 12.
Invitations Invitations (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All diary cases should be made for the Minister's Diary Secretary's signature, unless advised otherwise. · All diary cases should provide an accept and decline letter unless advised otherwise by the Private Office. · Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice, advice from Special Advisers (required for all diary invites) and the Communications team if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits etc). · Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people. · Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. · Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. · Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. · Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the General Template folder within Microsoft Word ("Ministers" folder, then "Minister for Learning and Skills" template) · Please leave 6 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow

	<p>the Minister to write the greeting and signature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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 are moved onto the second page. · Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft.
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Minister wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · MSPs · MPs · MEPs · Members of the House of Lords · Elected Council Members · Chairman of Fringe Bodies · Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents · Parliamentary candidates
Official Replies	<p>Please include "I have been asked by Dr Allan to thank you for your letter of dd/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.</p>

Reallocation	<p>GFs can be reallocated so that Dr Allan 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 simply include the words, "I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio".</p>	
Signature	<p>Letters for the Minister's signature</p> <p>Letters for PS/Mr Ingram's signature</p> <p>Letters for the diary secretary's signature</p>	<p>ALASDAIR ALLAN</p> <p>Private Secretary</p> <p>Diary/Correspondence Secretary</p>
Spelling	<p>Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.</p>	
Timing	<p>Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and possible changes as</p>	

	necessary.	
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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 Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does. 	

Finally, please feel free to contact either of us if you have a query or require advice - we are happy to help. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Directorates who would like to know more about what goes on in the Private Office and may even be booked for Directorate away days !

We know that everyone is under a lot of pressure but we, and the Minister, really appreciate all your help and support.

E-mails

Most correspondence is carried out by e-mail. All e-mails should be sent to ministerforlearningandskills@scotland.gsi.gov.uk mailbox - not to personal mailboxes.

When responding to a query from the Private Office, it is very helpful if you refer to the original query as this helps us to associate papers. It is also very useful if the title of the e-mail is self-explanatory and the same as the title of any attached submissions. This allows us to find the correspondence much more quickly.

When issuing documents by e-mail, in particular externally, please ensure that you have gone into the document to accept all track changes and saved it as new. Whilst an attachment may look "clean" on your screen before issue, all amendments and their history will be shown on the recipient's computer if they have track changes automatically switched on. This can be potentially embarrassing if the document has contained anything confidential or been significantly amended.

Attachments should be sent in standard Microsoft versions and not as Objective Links (this is more practical when dealing with large amounts of correspondence).

There should also be no embedded files/documents within emails.

Parliamentary Questions

Oral PQs

When drafting an oral PQ, please pay particular attention to wording. It is difficult to read out answers that are too long or wordy. Complex quotes, tables and text in italics should also be avoided. Answers should be no more than four or five lines long.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs. 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 briefing 2 or 3 key points that the Minister should get across - the key messages.

Written PQs

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

Speeches

Once a time and date for an event has been agreed, the Diary Secretary will request briefing and, where appropriate, a speaking note. Particular attention should be given to whether the event is major or minor and the potential media attention it may attract. This will determine whether a speech or a speaking note is required.

Formal speeches (eg. an announcement, conference, debate or launch) will require a draft **at least 1 week** before the event to allow the Minister time to read the speech and make changes if required.

For formal engagements, the Minister prefers his speeches in full sentences. The context of the gathering is key. If it is an informal few words after a dinner engagement, please do not spend too much time on the briefing or the speech as the Minister is likely to just speak "off the cuff". A few bullet points on the key messages to get across will suffice.

Annex A shows the covering sheet which should be completed as a covering note when providing any speech (same as briefing template). It also provides an example of a complete briefing paper.

The following points should be used in preparing a speech for the Minister:

- **Format:** Both speaking notes and speeches should be formatted in Arial, size 16 with 1.5 line spacing.
- **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).
- **Pages should be numbered** (middle of footer), as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled.
- **A word count** at the end of each speech should also be included.
- **Speaking rate:** The Minister speaks at 150 words per minute. Minus 20% for Parliamentary debates to allow for interventions.
- **Q&A:** The Minister prefers to deliver **speeches no greater than 10 minutes**,

followed by a "Question and Answer" session with the audience, if appropriate. Even if a Q&A session is not indicated on the programme, briefing should be included for this, including any strong reasons why the Minister should not take questions. A note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to be raised is also helpful.

The Top Tips on writing a speech for the Minister

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 the Minister?
- How long will they expect him to speak for?
- Is the speech appropriate to the audience e.g. school children?
- Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?

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 - the Minister will add anecdotes, jokes etc. as appropriate

It is usually best to forward the speech to the Minister as early as possible. The Minister will then amend it himself to final form, if appropriate, checking that officials are content with the content of the final speech.

The Minister's Diary

When you call the office to enquire about the Minister's availability, we can suggest dates but we will not reserve time in the diary. Office policy is not to put anything into the diary without the Minister's formal agreement.

If the engagement is not being dealt with through MACCS, then the Minister's agreement should be sought through a short submission with as much information as possible (eg. date, time, location, purpose, key messages etc.).

When the Minister agrees to undertake an engagement or meeting, Steven will be in

touch to confirm the agreed date and time and will send the meeting request to the appropriate Action Officer. It is helpful for Private Office to know which officials are attending meetings to ensure an appropriate room is booked. Please ensure you accept meeting requests and give suggestions for other attendees as early as possible.

It is extremely important that any changes to the timing or location is cleared with Steven first.

Please ensure that we have the full address (including postcode) of the place that the Minister is visiting at least 3 weeks in advance. This is required so that the Diary Secretary can issue courtesy e-mails to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that the Minister will be in their constituency.

Bruce Crawford MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business & Government Strategy

Responsibilities include:

- Government Strategy
- Freedom of Information
- UK Relations
- Liaison with MOD
- Legislative Programme
- Relationship with all Ministers
- The management of Government Business in the Parliament

Box times

Mr Crawford receives papers every day during the Parliamentary session. Please note the following closing times of the box.

- Tuesday - Thursday box closes at 5 pm
- Monday and Friday box closes at 3 pm

Biography

Bruce Crawford worked in the Scottish Office as a civil servant from 1974 to 1999. He was also a Councillor for Perth & Kinross council from 1988 to 2001. He was elected as Leader of Perth and Kinross Council in 1996 and remained in that post until the Scottish Parliament elections in 1999, when he was elected as the MSP for Mid-Scotland and Fife. He served on the Board of the Tourist Authority Enterprise Company, was Chair of the Kinross-shire Partnership and Perth and Kinross Recreational Facilities Limited.

In May 2007 Bruce was elected as the constituency MSP for Stirling and was also appointed Minister for Parliamentary Business.

Bruce is married and has three sons. When not working Bruce enjoys reading, playing golf and watching football. Mr Crawford is a supporter of Dunfermline Athletic and the Scotland national football team.

Ministerial Box Arrangements

Mr Crawford receives papers every day during the Parliamentary session. Please note the following closing times of the box.

- Tuesday - Thursday box closes at 5 pm
- Monday and Friday box closes at 3 pm

If you need to get urgent papers to Mr Crawford outside these times please contact the Minister's Diary Secretary in advance.

Details of box closures during recess will be sent round Private Offices and Directorates in advance of recess. If you have any queries regarding box closing times please contact the Minister's Diary Secretary.

Ministerial Engagements

The Diary Secretary will be your first point of contact for any engagement. A diary request and briefing request will be sent out after an engagement has been accepted.

A pre-meeting will be arranged one week before the engagement/meeting and all briefing must be received in the Private office in advance of this meeting, timings will be included in the email/meeting request. If, for whatever reason, you find that you cannot make the allocated deadline then please let the Diary Secretary know well in advance.

Officials should arrive 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time in the event that the Minister requires to discuss any issues before the meeting/event begins.

Mobiles should be kept on at all times when providing briefing for the Minister.

Speeches

Preferred format for speeches is on A4 Arial, 18 pt, single line spacing. Please keep short paragraphs. Bold text should only be used to indicate emphasis. Any Q&A should be clearly marked up in the index at the beginning of the briefing pack.

The Minister speaks at approximately 160-170 wpm. Paragraphs should be no more than 2 or 3 sentences long. Please include a word count at the end of the speech and number pages.

For closing speeches for debates in the Parliament the Minister requests a short one page note on each contentious issue that is expected to be raised by the opposition. The note should provide a line to take followed by a short background note with space below for the Minister to add his own comments.

Mobiles should be kept on at all times when providing speeches for the Minister.

Ministerial Submissions

Mr Crawford prefers briefing notes to start with a clear and concise summary of the content of the note, highlighting any lines to take before any discussion of the details on the subject of the briefing. Submissions should be submitted with enough time for Mr Crawford to consider fully (usually five working days).

All minutes to the Minister should have a clear purpose, summarise the options available and set out concise conclusions or recommendations. The Minister should be able to look at a submission and tell quickly from the initial paragraph what he is required to do i.e. state that he is content. Please note that the covering minute should not be any longer than two pages.

Submit emails to [Minister for parliamentary business](#). Please note that careful consideration should be given to copying the First Minister in to any submission for the Minister for Parliamentary Business.

Useful points to note

- Ensure that relevant Ministers, Director Generals, Directors, Communication Team and Special advisers are copied in.
- Remove all template comments and track changes
- If a submission is urgent or immediate a courtesy phone call to the Private Office to alert them that it is coming in.
- Security marking should reflect what is in the public domain.
- Please proof read all material, correct grammar and spelling mistakes.
- The Minister may not be aware of what your abbreviations stand for therefore please spell out in full once with abbreviations in brackets.
- Submissions should be sent by email to the Minister's mailbox and should be in word format. Please avoid sending objective links.
- When sending annexes to the submission please state on the covering email the number of pages in each annex.
- Avoid where ever possible but please highlight in the covering minute if there are any embedded documents.

Written PQs

Answers

- Simple and to the point
- No longer than five lines long
- 16 point Arial
- 1.5 line spacing
- Careful consideration to likely supplementary questions

Brian Adam MSP
Minister for Parliamentary Business & Chief Whip

Responsibilities include:

- Group matters
- Liaison between the Group and Ministers
- Delivering the vote

Box times

Mr Adam receives papers every day during the Parliamentary session.

Please note the following closing times of the box.

- Tuesday - Thursday box closes at 5 pm
- Friday box closes at 3 pm

Biography

Brian Adam was elected as a Councillor for Middlefield in Aberdeen in 1988 serving three terms. Prior to 1999 he was a principal biochemist in the NHS and a trade union activist.

In 1999 Brian was elected as MSP for North East Scotland and in 2003 as MSP for Aberdeen North. In May 2011 he was elected as the constituency MSP for Aberdeen Donside and was appointed Minister for Parliamentary Business and Chief Whip.

Brian is married and with five children. When not working Brian is active in his church and a keen follower of Aberdeen Football Team.

Box Arrangements

Mr Adam receives papers every day during the Parliamentary session. Please note the following closing times of the box.

- Tuesday - Thursday box closes at 5 pm
- Friday box closes at 3 pm

If you need to get urgent papers to Mr Adam outside these times please contact the Minister's Private Secretary in advance.

Details of box closures during recess will be sent round Private Offices and Directorates in advance of recess. If you have any queries regarding box closing times please contact the Minister's Private Secretary.

Submissions

Mr Adam prefers briefing notes to start with a clear and concise summary of the content of the note, highlighting any lines to take before any discussion of the details on the subject of

the briefing. Submissions should be submitted with enough time for Mr Adam to consider fully (usually five working days).

All minutes to the Minister should have a clear purpose, summarise the options available and set out concise conclusions or recommendations. The Minister should be able to look at a submission and tell quickly from the initial paragraph what he is required to do i.e. state that he is content. Please note that the covering minute should not be any longer than two pages.

Submit emails to [Minister for Parliamentary Business and Chief Whip](#). Please note that careful consideration should be given to copying the First Minister in to any submission for the Minister for Parliamentary Business & Chief Whip.

Useful points to note

- Ensure that relevant Ministers, Director Generals, Directors, Communication Team and Special advisers are copied in.
- Remove all template comments and track changes
- If a submission is urgent or immediate a courtesy phone call to the Private Office to alert them that it is coming in.
- Security marking should reflect what is in the public domain.
- Please proof read all material, correct grammar and spelling mistakes.
- The Minister may not be aware of what your abbreviations stand for therefore please spell out in full once with abbreviations in brackets.
- Submissions should be sent by email to the Minister's mailbox and should be in word format. Please avoid sending objective links.
- When sending annexes to the submission please state on the covering email the number of pages in each annex.
- Avoid where ever possible but please highlight in the covering minute if there are any embedded documents.

Engagements

The Diary Secretary will be your first point of contact for any engagement. A diary request and briefing request will be sent out after an engagement has been accepted.

A pre-meeting will be arranged one week before the engagement/meeting and all briefing must be received in the Private office in advance of this meeting, timings will be included in the email/meeting request. If, for whatever reason, you find that you cannot make the allocated deadline then please let the Diary Secretary know well in advance.

Officials should arrive 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time in the event that the Minister requires to discuss any issues before the meeting/event begins.

Mobiles should be kept on at all times when providing briefing for the Minister.

Speeches

Preferred format for speeches is on A4 Arial, 20 pt, double line spacing. Please keep short paragraphs. Bold text should only be used to indicate emphasis. Any Q&A should be clearly marked up in the index at the beginning of the briefing pack.

The Minister speaks at approximately 160-170 wpm. Paragraphs should be no more than 2 or 3 sentences long. Please include a word count at the end of the speech and number pages.

For closing speeches for debates in the Parliament the Minister requests a short one page note on each contentious issue that is expected to be raised by the opposition. The note should provide a line to take followed by a short background note with space below for the Minister to add his own comments.

Mobiles should be kept on at all times when providing speeches for the Minister.

Parliamentary Questions

Answers:

- Simple and to the point
- No longer than five lines long
- 16 point Arial
- 1.5 line spacing
- Careful consideration to likely supplementary questions

Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Culture &c External Affairs

Responsibilities include:

- Culture and the arts
- Historic Scotland and Lottery Funding
- Europe
- External Affairs
- International Development
- Built heritage
- Architecture
- Broadcasting
- National Records of Scotland
- Major Events Strategy
- Digital Participation

Box times

- Ms Hyslop's box closes at **4.00pm Monday to Thursday** .
- Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. You will be notified in advance of any changes.

Biography

Born in Ayrshire, in her early years Fiona Hyslop was brought up in England before returning to Scotland and graduating from Glasgow University with an MA (Hons) in Economic History and sociology.

She completed a post graduate Diploma in Industrial Administration at the Scottish College of Textiles, before moving to Edinburgh to join the financial services company Standard Life where she held various positions in sales and marketing, latterly as Brand Development Manager.

Fiona Hyslop was elected a Lothians MSP in 1999. In 2007 she was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, and was responsible for re-establishing the principle of free higher education in Scotland by abolishing the graduate endowment fee.

Appointed Minister for Culture and External Affairs in December 2009, Fiona Hyslop established the cultural development body, Creative Scotland, in July 2010, as part of the Public Services Reform Act. She also secured funding towards the Dundee V&A project, the new Bannockburn visitor centre, and the creation of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire.

As part of the Scottish Government's programme of international development, Fiona Hyslop launched strategic plans for engaging with India and Pakistan in 2010.

Following the Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2011, she was elected MSP for Linlithgow and was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs.

Her Ministerial portfolio covers External Affairs, Europe, Culture and the Arts, Broadcasting, Architecture, Built Heritage, Lottery Funding, Historic Scotland, National Records of Scotland and Major Events Strategy.

She is married with three children and lives in Linlithgow.

Communications Team and Special Advisers

Communications Team (Press Office)

For any engagement/visit invitation the Minister receives early consideration should be given to potential media interest. It is important therefore that officials liaise with Communications colleagues, and this advice should be reflected in the PS covering minute that comes forward with the draft response. If the advice is to accept the invitation/meeting request this **must** be signed off at Deputy Director level.

Special Advisers

The relevant Special Adviser should be consulted when necessary, and copied into relevant policy related minutes/briefings.

- Kevin Pringle and Stuart Nicolson deal with media/presentational issues, and should be copied into anything relevant and consulted when relevant.

Box Arrangements

- Ms Hyslop's box closes at **4.00pm Monday to Thursday** .
- Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. You will be notified in advance of any changes.

Briefings

Briefing and speaking notes for Ms Hyslop should be with the Private Office **one week in advance** of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given - for major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance.

Please note that the deadlines which are set 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 of the event. This will cut down on the last minute requests for information which we have to make.

It is imperative to liaise with Communications colleagues in advance of any event.

Please use the attached briefing template for speeches or events. This should be at the start of the briefing pack. This sheet provides Ms Hyslop and her Private Office, with key information for any event.

The key points which the Cabinet Secretary wishes to be included are;

- who - she is meeting/who the key people are (including biogs)

- who - the audience - i.e., children, professionals, volunteers etc
- where - the event is taking place, including post code and location map
- why - i.e., does this stem from a submission, MACCS case etc
- what - background on what is being visited or the organisation being met
- when - date and time of event
- Suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- Relevant facts and figures/current issues and Q&A where appropriate
- Where Ms Hyslop is chairing more formal meetings or groups, please provide a steering brief for her to use.
- Meeting Agenda / list of topics for discussion or Event running order
- Always consider whether a Press Release is appropriate.

The choreography at events is important i.e. when will the Cab Sec be speaking, is there a lectern, is it informal, when is she free to leave etc

Please ensure that the following points are taken into consideration when making up the briefing pack:

- Any papers we receive from organisations (i.e. guest lists) will have been sent to the lead official and should be incorporated into the briefing. If there are any changes to be made to the briefing, due to unforeseen errors or circumstances, please e-mail a full clean version again if changes are throughout the pack, **if changes are only in one or two attachments please only send the relevant pages**. Regardless, please always indicate in the covering e-mail what changes have been made to which sections.
- Please let the **Diary Secretary** know in advance if there are any non-ailable documents coming forward. Please also ensure these are photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-ailable documents, please check with Private Office which address (i.e. - SAH or Parliament) the item should be sent to.
- You should 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, please contact the Private Secretary. You should find out, in particular if the Cabinet Secretary will be expected to take questions after a speech.
- Communications CEA should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. **Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.**
- An address, a map of the location and contact number is essential. For external visits, you should provide a contact number and **full address and postcode** for the venue since we need to inform the local MSP/MP when a Cabinet Secretary will be visiting their constituency.
- Please advise in the briefing which officials will be accompanying the Cabinet Secretary and provide their mobile number (please ensure this is switched on!). Not only does the Cabinet Secretary/Private Secretary require this information for their own use, but we may also need to inform organisers how many people will attend an event.
- If a speech is being provided it should **ALWAYS be Annex A**. The cover sheet of the briefing pack should note that the speech is Annex A, however, the speech itself

should **ALWAYS** be sent as a **separate word document**. This is for ease of e-mailing it onto blackberries etc or to the official report if a speech for debate.

- If the Cabinet Secretary is launching a new report; or responding to a report or drawing heavily on a publication during a speech please ensure that a hard copy (or electronic one if you do not have a hard copy) is included with the briefing.
- Include a list of who the Cabinet Secretary will meet at the engagement and what position they hold and their biographies. If possible, please also advise on who they should try to speak to.
- If organising a day of events, please 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.
- When providing briefing that includes annexes, please list all annexes in the covering note.
- Plaques for Ms Hyslop should read "Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs".
- Ms Hyslop has asked that draft thank you letters are provided on the Cabinet Secretary's letter template for visits and engagements. Please keep letters short and friendly with space allowed for the Cabinet Secretary to write in her own personal note.
- Feedback from events is important - the Cabinet Secretary likes to know how a speech has been received by stakeholders. If possible a brief note would be appreciated.
- If an event is **BLACK TIE** or anything other than lounge suit, please make Private Office aware as soon as you realise. If Private Office are already aware of this, you will be able to tell as it will be noted in the title of the diary entry.
- For more informal speeches under 5 minutes in length (i.e. - receptions), in addition to the full speaking note, one page of bullet points speaking notes should be provided outlining the main points which needs to be covered.

Official attendance

Ms Hyslop likes to have a policy official in attendance at events/engagements. Officials attend to introduce the Cabinet Secretary to key/relevant attendees; brief the Cabinet Secretary, if the need arises; and to note any follow-up action. It also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise only talk to on the other end of the phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material; you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received or how the Q&As have gone at the event.

Ministerial Correspondence

Please find below a note of the Cabinet Secretary's preferences for correspondence and diary cases:

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	MSPs - Use the reply address provided on the original letter, this is NOT 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 ALWAYS
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	<p>check this.</p> <p>Constituents - 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.</p> <p>Anyone who sends their request by e-mail rather than by Royal Mail should receive their response by e-mail. Please complete the name and address section of the reply as normal but underneath please put</p> <p>By email to: XXX correspondent e-mail address XXX</p>
Contact Details	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary to discuss arrangements.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent. • Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked. • Always include a PS/Minute.
Co-ordinated responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent and up to date.
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the response is >6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. • If the MACCS case is not sent up to within the PO deadline, please 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.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
Invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please phone the Diary Secretary for a private office view of the Cabinet Secretary's availability to attend events to get an early steer. • An accept and decline letter should be provided for all diary cases unless you are advised otherwise by the Private Office. • Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice and the Communications team if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits etc). If you think there is no value to the Cab Sec's attendance, do not be afraid to recommend Reject. • Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Cabinet Secretary is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event. • When drafting an acceptance letter for an event on a Parliamentary day, please add the caveat ...delighted to attend subject to

	Parliamentary business.	
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people. • Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. • Keep sentences short and avoid jargon. • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response. 	
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. • Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. • Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow the Cabinet Secretary to write the greeting and signature. • If, due to the above formatting, the Cabinet Secretary'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. • Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft. 	
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Cabinet Secretary wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSPs • MPs • MEPs • Members of the House of Lords • Elected Council Members • Chairman of Fringe Bodies • Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents • Parliamentary candidates • Key stakeholders <p>The Private Secretary should sign all other correspondence. If in doubt please contact the Correspondence Secretary in Private Office.</p>	
Official Replies	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.	
Reallocation	MRs 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".	
Signature	Letters for the Cabinet Secretary's signature (should be BOLD AND CAPITALS)	FIONA HYSLOP
	Letters for PS/Ms Hyslop's signature	

		Private Secretary
Spelling	Please ALWAYS use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Cabinet Secretary 3 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener (Please note that Ms Hyslop uses the Scottish spelling of 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. • Do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does. 	

Speeches

Speeches: For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required 1 week before the event to give the Cabinet Secretary enough time to read the speech and make the necessary changes if required.

Ms Hyslop speaks at approximately 150 words per minute and requests that approx 10% of her speaking time is 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. Bullet points and capital letters cannot be orated!

Speaking Notes: For informal or short speeches, the Cabinet Secretary prefers a short speaking note of bullet points (1 page max) with heading used to sign post the contents. (Using full sentences, not abbreviated, so that they can read out loud verbatim is necessary). **This method should also be used for Cabinet speaking notes.**

Format:

The way the Cabinet Secretary likes her speeches depends on how they are being delivered. Please **ALWAYS** check if there will be a lectern at the event for which the Cabinet Secretary is giving the speech.

For any speeches the Cabinet Secretary is delivering from a lectern and for formal speeches over 5 minutes in length -

Ariel Font 16, 1.5 Line spacing should be used. 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**, as the Cabinet Secretary prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled. Please include 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.

For any speeches the Cabinet Secretary will NOT be delivering from a lectern and for informal speeches -

1 page of bullet point speaking notes are required, Ariel Font 12, Single line spacing should be used.

- Speeches should **ALWAYS be Annex A**. The cover sheet of the briefing pack should note that the speech is Annex A, however, the speech itself should **ALWAYS** be sent as a **separate word document**. This is for ease of e-mailing it onto blackberries etc or to the official report if a speech for debate.
- Please put the title of the speech within the header along with the annex reference and page number. Please do not manually type in the page number as this effect the numbering of the pages if paragraphs are added or removed. Please instead use the 'insert page number' icon.
- Please **add the word count and speaking time into the footer along with the page number**. Please do not manually type in the page number as this effect the numbering of the pages if paragraphs are added or removed. Please instead use the 'insert page number' icon.

The Top tips on writing a speech for Ms Hyslop

Do not begin sentences with And or But.

Active not passive

- Ms Hyslop has asked that speeches are written in active and not passive format.

Know the audience

- What do they expect to hear from the Cabinet Secretary?
- How long will they expect her to speak for?
- Is the speech appropriate to the audience e.g. Professionals, Children?
- Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?
- Will the audience be familiar with any acronyms used?
- Is there call to say a few opening words of welcome in another language, such as Gaelic? (if so please follow the text with a phonetic note of how to pronounce the words/sentence).

Consult widely to improve relevance

- Think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up to date position possible on these (consulting with Comms team where necessary)
- Add as much context as possible to show an understanding of the issues facing the audience and where they fit into the bigger picture
- Always remember that all Ministers are responsible for the 5 strategic themes. Cabinet Secretary places great importance on this.

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 - the Cabinet Secretary will add anecdotes etc as appropriate

Please test drive your speech on colleagues

- Whilst it may read well it might not deliver well when spoken.

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 as follows:

- Answers should be clear and concise - and for Oral answers, 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 the Cabinet Secretary cannot stand up in the chamber and refer to a previous answer that is not immediately available to the member and therefore a fully written response should always be provided for Oral questions. Where cross referring to 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'. And the question being referred to and its background note should be included in the background note of the question being answered.
- Q & 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 & 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 PO of whom) to attend the pre-brief which normally takes place on a Tuesday or Wednesday AM.
- 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 the Cabinet Secretary has any last minute queries. Officials should also watch questions in case there is any follow up action required.

Diary

The diary becomes heavily committed very quickly and it is helpful if dates for routine/recurring meetings can be scheduled as far in advance as possible as it may not

always be feasible to accommodate requests at short notice. A selection of dates can be held provisionally until a date is finalised.

We are happy to provide advice on the Cabinet Secretary's availability for engagements, although the Cabinet Secretary will always wish to see formal advice from officials on the merits of her attendance/participation in events before considering whether or not to accept an invitation.

Any invitation being accepted for a Wednesday or Thursday during the Parliamentary Session should always include a caveat about acceptance being '**subject to being excused from Parliamentary Business**'.

When an event is entered in the diary, the lead action officer and other relevant officials are sent a diary entry requesting briefing. It is the responsibility of the lead official to check the correct venue and timings have been entered and if they discover that the event timings are incorrect or if they change (even marginally) following the request, from what is entered in the Ministerial diary, they should inform Private Office of the change immediately as this can have a knock on effect re. timings of other engagements in the Ministerial diary and effect car bookings etc.

Minutes

When sending advice in the form of a minute to the Cabinet Secretary please give consideration as to whether this needs to be side copied to the First Minister or other Cabinet Secretaries.

The appropriate Director(s), the Business Management Unit (BMU CEA), Communications colleagues and the relevant Special Advisers should also routinely be copied into minutes and any other correspondence that are sent to the Cabinet Secretary.

Please pay particular attention to the priority section of the minute:-

- **Immediate** - means that a response is needed within 24 hours
- **Urgent** - within three working days; and
- **Routine** - a response required no sooner than three working days from the date of the minute

All minutes should follow the standard format with a conclusion or recommendation at the end. Ideally, you should keep the minute to one page with supplementary information contained in attached annexes. Copy lists should be at the very end of the minute, just before any annexes.

If there are additional papers relating to the minute it would be appreciated by Private Office if these could be attached separately to the covering e-mail. **Under no circumstances should these be embedded within the minute as they may be missed when papers are being printed**

Alex Neil MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure & Capital Investment

Responsibilities include:

- Scottish Water
- Procurement
- European Structural Funds
- Scottish Futures Trust
- Transport policy (shared with KB)
- Regeneration
- Digital
- Fuel Poverty and Energy Assistance

Box times

- Mr Neil receives a box Monday to Thursday during the Parliamentary session.
- The box closes at 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and 2pm on Tuesdays.
- Please note that, as there is no Friday box, the deadline for box closure for the weekend box is Thursday at 4pm.
- During Recess the Cabinet Secretary will receive a box twice a week.

Biography

Alex Neil is currently a Member of the Scottish Parliament Airdrie and Shotts.

Born in Patna, Ayrshire, in 1951, he began political life as a member of the Labour Party. He joined the Labour Party at the age of 16 and became the head of their student wing whilst studying economics at the University of Dundee. Upon graduation, he became the Labour Party's Scottish researcher until 1976 when he left Labour to form the new Scottish Labour Party.

After the 1979 General Election, he worked in America, before returning to Scotland and forming his own economic consultancy business. In 1985, he joined the Scottish National Party (SNP) and stood as their candidate in the 1989 Glasgow Central by-election, also rising to senior office within the Party.

After election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, he became, firstly, SNP spokesman for social justice issues, before chairing the Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee from 2000-2003, and again from 2003-2007. Until his appointment as the Scottish Government's Minister for Housing and Communities in February 2009, Mr Neil was Vice-Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee and a member of the Finance Committee. He was also co-Convenor of the Cross Party Group on the Scottish Economy and on the Council of Europe's Local and Regional Authorities Association. In May 2011 he was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment.

Mr Neil is married with one son and lives in Ayr.

Ministerial Submissions

All minutes to Ministers should have a **clear purpose, conclusion and timescale for response**. The Minister should be able to look at a submission and identify quickly from the Conclusion/ Recommendation Paragraph what he is required to consider i.e. Agree, state that he is content, request further advice etc. Please note that the actual covering minute should ideally be no more than two pages long.

Other useful points to note:

- Ensure that all relevant Ministers, DGs. Communications Teams and SPADS are copied in.
- Ensure each page is numbered.
- Remove all template comments, track changes.
- Ensure correct timing - eg: Routine/Urgent/Immediate. Immediate Minutes should have IMMEDIATE in the subject box of the accompanying email and a courtesy phone call to Private Office is helpful to alert us and ensure that the Minister is available to consider the issue. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends.
- Security Markings - should be accurate and reflect what is in the public domain and what is not.
- Please proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling. Remember also that the Minister may not know what some abbreviations stand for - best to spell it out full at least once.
- Submissions should be sent via e-mail in word format. Please avoid sending objective links as the Minister is unable to access link if sending submission to him at home or on his Blackberry.
- When sending annexes please indicate in the covering e-mail how many pages in length each annex is.

There is also guidance on the intranet on preparing Minutes to Ministers. Grateful if this could be adhered to as much as possible.

Speeches

Mr Neil prefers speeches to be in bullet points. Pages should be numbered on the top right hand corner. Font size should be in 18pt.

In general, most speeches should be less than 15 minutes.

Every speech should have a clear message to be communicated. It would be useful when preparing a draft speech that a draft outline is sent to the Minister prior to receiving a fuller draft. This gives the Minister time to consider whether he feels the speech covers the main points and messages he wishes to address.

Mr Neil is generally comfortable doing Q&A after a speech. This should be confirmed with Private Office.

Where the Minister 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 be completed in full.

Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to Green Folder correspondence.

Often it is the case that Private Office amend MACCS cases at our end, whether it be formatting, spelling or grammar before the Minister sees it. It is useful if you compare the scanned signed version with that which you originally sent up to Private Office - this will let you see what changes have been made and give you a better inkling of the Minister's style.

Please note preferences differ between Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and First Minister .

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	<p>MSPs - please 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>Constituents - 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>Email - 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.</p>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary.</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about...." · Answer points raised · Give the background to the response to the points raised · 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.
Co-ordinated responses	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that all facts and figures are consistent.</p>
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Please refer to the date of the original letter in the

	<p>response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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 Ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before he sees it.
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying. · If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Font	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The main text of the letter should always be Arial , font size 12 · Please note that the Victoria Quay address details, our ref. and date are formatted in Friz Quadrata, font size 10 . Please do not reformat.
Invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All invitations addressed to Mr Neil should be replied to by his Private Office, even if another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is to take on the engagement on his behalf (see also reallocation). 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. [if the event is in the Parliamentary session, not recess] · Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it is true, especially if the event is some way off. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event. · Diary responses can be very brief, unless there are specific arrangements or policy details that need to be included. Generic examples are suggested below: <p>DIARY ACCEPT</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure & capital Investment, to attend your Annual Conference.</p>

Mr Neil would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary, by email, to agree a mutually convenient date / make the necessary arrangements.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

DIARY DECLINE

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure & Capital Investment, to attend your Annual Conference on 1 April 2008 .

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Mr Neil will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

- 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 PO has indicated otherwise.
- Always include a completed PS diary template, including background details and advice from officials, press office and special advisers.
- Responses should be in the Private Secretary's name, unless the correspondent is a politician, or the Private Office specifically say that Mr Neil 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.

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- Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.
- Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood.
- 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...".
- Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a case is reallocated to Mr Neil for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility" should be used. Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately". • 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". • Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.
<p>Layout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so. · Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word. · Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and his signature. · 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. · 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....." · Please do not use paragraph numbering. · Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. << text>> · Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals " ALEX NEIL "
<p>Official Replies</p>	<p>If correspondence letter/e-mail is sent from Private Office to MCU, needing an Official Reply, Mr Neil must see the letter before it being sent to the correspondent. Please include "I have been asked by Mr Neil to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf" or a similar form of words.</p>
<p>Reallocation</p>	<p>GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Neil is answering on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their</p>

	letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility".	
Signature	Letters for the Minister's signature	ALEX NEIL
	Letters for PS/Mr Neil's signature	PRIVATE SECRETARY
Spelling	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.	
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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 Esquire after a name. 	

Briefings for Engagements & Meetings

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in the Minister's diary, the diary secretary will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This e-mail will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required.

Where a speech needs to be drafted, it is useful to contact Private Office to give the Minister an outline of the main points to be made. This gives the Minister an early opportunity to give a steer and hopefully means that not too much tweaking is required.

If the Minister is making a visit, Private Office will require the full postal address (including post code) four weeks in advance, to allow us to notify local MSPs and MPs that Mr Neil will be in their area.

Mr Neil prefers briefing to be in 'lines to take' or Q & A format. Wherever possible, a pre-meeting will be arranged prior to any briefing being put forward (especially for Committee appearances or debates) to discuss hot topics/key issues. This is also a good opportunity to check that Mr Neil is comfortable with the material to be presented and gives the Minister the opportunity to request specific briefing.

If a briefing pack has been sent to Private Office (e.g. for a debate) and there is further or amended briefing to come, this should just be sent separately. Time will have been spent flagging the original briefing pack for the Minister so a revised pack is not required, just email instructions where we need to add or replace individual pages.

Engagements

Please use the engagement template for all engagement briefing. This will ensure that we have a map (where required), postcodes, contact names and numbers. We can not stress enough that it is important that any official attending an event with the Minister should note their mobile number in the briefing, and have this phone switched on! This means that we or the Minister can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics. A member of Private Office and Communications Health usually attend external events with the Minister. It is helpful if you advise the organisers of this in advance of the event (having checked with both offices first).

Meetings

Please note that when attending a meeting, the Minister's preference is that officials should take a note of the meeting. There is a misconception that Private Office do this, however, Private Office ensure that Ministerial action points are taken forward from the meeting. It is useful to know in advance who will be taking the note of the meeting. Grateful if a draft meeting note (to select copy list) could be with Private Office with three days of the meeting.

Parliamentary Questions

Oral PQs

When drafting an Oral PQ please pay attention to the wording. Officials should consider an area the MSP represents and the issues they have raised previously. It is difficult to read out long wordy answers. Complex quotes and tables should be avoided. Answers should be no more than 4-5 lines long, simple and to the point.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting Oral PQs. Often, the most obvious questions are missed. **Supplementary q & a should be in Arial size 16 - not in newspaper column format.** Make use of bold text to make key points stand out. Please also include positive key facts - this enables Ministers to rebut criticisms and turn questions into an opportunity to present policy favourably.

Please ensure that the drafter of the PQ or a colleague familiar with the subject is contactable on the Thursday the PQ is to be answered as Mr Neil may require last minute information. And, again, if the drafting official is on annual leave, please ensure someone else is familiar with the subject and is contactable on the day.

Wherever possible, the official who has drafted the PQ should also watch the Minister deliver the answer (or check the Official Report afterwards). This lets you see the Minister's style and also alert Private Office if an inaccuracy has been made that we need to correct.

Written PQs

Mr Neil 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. The Minister has noted that some answers contain information in the background note that is helpful and releasable, yet the

actual answer is sometimes too curt. However, don't answer questions that haven't been asked.

Answers generally should avoid repetition and the drafter should always proof-read before sending to DG Health.

Please don't put See Background Note to S3W-XXXX in a background note, it should be copied over for ease of reference.

Mr Neil wishes to be informed well in advance before any holding reply is issued.

Keith Brown MSP
Minister for Housing & Transport

Responsibilities include:

- Transport Policy
- Transport Delivery
- Public Transport
- Roads
- Rail Services
- Air and Ferry Services
- Housing (not travellers or crofting)
- Veterans (not defence or armed force)

Box times

- Mr Brown's box closes on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 4pm, as well as 1pm on Fridays.

Biography

Keith Brown has been a member of the Scottish parliament for Ochil Constituency since May 2007. Before his election he served for eleven years as a councillor in Clackmannanshire, serving on the Council's Education Committee, and holding the post of Council Leader from 1999 to 2003. He is a member of the European Union's Committee of the Regions, serving as President (2004-2006) of the Union for a Europe of the Nations - European Alliance (UEN-EA)group on that body.

Prior to this, Keith worked for fifteen years as a local government professional in neighbouring Stirling, where he was also an active trade union representative with UNISON. He is also a graduate of Dundee University and studied at the University of Prince Edward Island. Originally from Edinburgh, Keith now lives in Dollar with his three children.

Correspondence

Please find below a note of the Minister's preferences for Green Folders (GFs) and other general correspondence:

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

Address	MSPs - please use the reply address provided on the letter. MCS 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. Constituents - 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.
Contact Details	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's

	Diary Secretary to discuss arrangements.
Content	<p>Please ensure that responses are as helpful as possible and answer the points raised by the correspondent.</p> <p>Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.</p> <p>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.</p>
Co-ordinated responses	<p>Many MCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures given in responses are consistent.</p> <p>Where a letter touches on more than once policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials. This helps to ensure that we are presenting a fully informed, joined up picture of the Government and ensures that the answer given by the Minister is as robust as possible.</p>
Date	<p>Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.</p> <p>To save time it would be helpful if the month and year were not included in any letter for signature. This will be added by Private Office the day the letter issues.</p>
Delays	<p>Please make every effort possible to ensure that all MCS cases are sent to Private Office within the set timescales. If the MCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.</p> <p>If the response is >6 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</p>
Font	The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
Invitations	<p>All diary cases should be made for the Private Secretary, signature unless advised otherwise.</p> <p>All diary cases should be provided with an accept and decline letter unless you are advised otherwise by the Private Office.</p> <p>Always include a completed PS minute along with Official advice and advice from the Communications team if the event has a press element to it (mainly required for conferences/visits etc).</p> <p>Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business in your draft as a reason to decline an invitation. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.</p>

Language	Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.	
Layout	<p>Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so.</p> <p>Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Minister's folder in Microsoft Word.</p> <p>Please leave 6 lines free at the top and bottom of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and signature.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft.</p>	
Ministerial Replies	<p>The Minister wishes to sign all letters from the following correspondents:</p> <p>MSPs</p> <p>MPs</p> <p>MEPs</p> <p>Members of the House of Lords</p> <p>Elected Council Members</p> <p>Chairman of Fringe Bodies</p> <p>Friends/Acquaintances/Constituents</p> <p>Parliamentary candidates</p>	
Official Replies	Please include "Thank you for your letter of dd/month to the Minister for Housing & Transport regarding / inviting him to / I have been asked to respond" or a similar form of words.	
Reallocation	GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Brown 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 simply include the words, "I am replying as this forms part of my Ministerial portfolio".	
Signature	Letters for the Minister's signature	KEITH BROWN

	Letters for PS/Mr Brown's signature	PRIVATE SECRETARY
Spelling	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
Timing	Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, clarification and changes as necessary.	
Titles	Please 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 Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included. Do not use Mrs/Miss or Ms unless the correspondent does.	

Briefings

Producing accurate, detailed briefing for events and meetings is vitally important as your briefing papers are the key documents Ministers use to prepare. When drafting briefing for meetings and events, please ensure that you have covered the following points:

Q .Have I used the right template?

Mr Brown would like briefing for meetings to be submitted in this format. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact private Office to discuss.

Q. What is the deadline for briefing?

Briefing and speaking notes for Mr Brown should be with the Private Office **no later** than one week in advance of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given. Meeting this deadline is important as Mr Brown needs to have the time to review your briefing and come back to officials with any questions he has. The later your briefing is, the less time the Minister has to review it. **If you are not going to meet this deadline for any reason, it is your responsibility to let Private Office know at the earliest opportunity.**

Q. Have I liaised with Press Office?

It is vital to liaise with Communications colleagues in advance of any event to ensure that an appropriate handling strategy is devised, and to give Press Office enough to notice to decide if a Press Officer is needed on the day. Communications Team should be consulted on both Lines to Take and the merits of a press release and 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. Please do not send us press releases that have not been cleared by Communications colleagues.

Q. Have I spoken to Private Office about the possibility of a pre-brief?

If you feel strongly that it would be beneficial for the Minister to have a pre-brief prior to a specific engagement, please contact the Minister's Private Secretary to discuss. We cannot guarantee that we will always be able to accommodate requests, but we will try our best to help.

Q. Have I contacted the event / meeting organiser?

You should always contact the event / meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like the Minister to do, or what they would like to discuss (if a formal meeting), 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 as soon as possible. You should find out, in particular if the Minister will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions **after a speech. If he will, please make sure that you inform Private Office immediately.**

Q. Does my briefing pack contain the following information?

- Biographies of the key people that the Minister will meet and details of any other key people at the event (eg, Directors of Education etc). It would be helpful if details of Councillors' political background could be included for information.
- Rough composition of the audience (eg teachers, young people, councillors etc). Approximate numbers would also be helpful.
- Suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- Relevant facts and figures/current issues
- Running order
- An address, map of location and contact number of venue and lead official - these are **essential.**
- Where Mr Brown is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use. Private Office can provide examples of steering briefs on request.

Q. Have I taken into account any documents from Private Office?

All papers we have received in relation to an event will have been sent to you and should be incorporated into the briefing. Please let Mr Brown's Diary Secretary know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents coming forward. Please also ensure these are photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, please check with Private Office where they should be sent as our time is split between Victoria Quay and the Parliament.

Q. I've submitted my briefing but some of the details have now changed. What should I do?

If there are any changes to be made to the briefing, due to unforeseen errors or circumstances, it is very helpful to provide Private Office with a full clean document again, via e-mail, (with covering note clearly explaining where the changes have been made) instead of pointing out the error or adding a separate sheet to the briefing.

Similarly, if any circumstances change and it is too late to submit a revised briefing, please call the Minister's Private Secretary to let her know at the earliest opportunity. This is preferable to letting the Minister know on arrival at the event.

At an Event - Official Attendance

Mr Brown prefers to have an official present at engagements. Please advise in your briefing which official(s) will be accompanying the Minister and provide their mobile number (s).

Officials attend to brief the Minister if the need arises and to take any feedback to the Directorate. Can you therefore, please ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when the Minister arrives. Please make yourself known immediately to the Minister and / or Private Secretary. Attendance also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may have otherwise only talked to on the other end of the phone. Given that you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material, you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received at the event.

After the Event

Once an external event has been undertaken Mr Brown has asked that a letter of thanks be drafted for his signature. Where possible, it would be helpful if this could be submitted along with the briefing. If not, please submit letters as soon as possible after the event.

The importance of Post Codes

For external visits, you should provide a contact number and full address and postcode for the venue. We need this to enable us to inform the local MSP/MP when a Minister will be visiting their constituency and the Government Car Service rely on a postcode to locate a venue.

If organising a day of events, please 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.

Submissions

Submissions to Mr Brown should be used to inform him of any issue on which he needs to make 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 Brown, it would be helpful to consider the following:

Q Have I used the right template?

Submissions for Mr Brown should be typed on the submissions template. The font should be Arial 12pt.

Q. Have I used the correct priority marking?

Timing should be marked as follows -

- Immediate - if response needed within 24 hours
- Routine - if response needed within three working days
- For Info - if response needed no sooner than three working days

- If there is a specific deadline this should also be mentioned in the timing field.

Q. Are my recommendations and/or conclusions typed in **bold**?

Q. Have I accurately marked any annexes (A,B,C etc) and given them appropriate titles?

Please Remember:

- Where possible the covering minute should be no more than one page long clearly outlining the key points and decisions required from Mr Brown.
- Please do not include PQ's, letters, press releases or embedded files within submissions.
- For submissions that are to be approved by the Minister and sent on to others it would be helpful to provide an electronic copy list.
- Please note that Private Office does not use ERDM. Please ensure that you send us Word copies of any documents you would like us to consider and not Objective links.

Speeches

Mr Brown places great importance on the quality of his speeches and wants to ensure that they are interesting and relevant to the audience. We realise that writing a speech can often be a daunting task, and hope that following tips will be of use to you.

Q. What will the deadline be for my draft speech to be sent to Private Office?

For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required in Private Office **no later** than 1 week before the event to give the Minister enough time to read the speech and make the necessary changes if required.

For major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance. If you feel your event may fall into this category, please seek guidance from Private Office at the earliest possible opportunity.

Q. Have I asked the event organisers how long they would like the Minister to speak for?

Please always discuss with organisers the length of time that will be allocated to the Minister to speak. Generally we would not expect Mr Brown to speak for any longer than 20 minutes and would do so only in exceptional circumstances. Please try and aim for having the Minister speaking for around 10 minutes maximum as a rule. This however, depends on the type of event so if you are at all unsure, please call Mr Brown's Private Secretary to discuss.

Q. Have I checked if there will be a lectern on stage?

Mr Brown generally prefers to speak in front of a lectern, but if one will not be available, please let us know as soon as possible as this will often have an impact on the type of speaking note required.

Top tips on writing a speech for Mr Brown

1. Know the audience

What do they expect to hear from the Minister?

How long will they expect him to speak for?

Is the speech appropriate to the audience? **This is vitally important.** If Mr Brown is speaking to an audience of school children, please do not provide a speech that is top heavy with policy information, this is not appropriate to the audience.

Who in the audience is worthy of a mention?

Has the chairperson received an OBE etc?

2. 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 Press 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.

3. 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 - the Minister will add anecdotes, jokes etc as appropriate

4. Format

Mr Brown prefers a full speech rather than notes or bullet points. Ariel Font 16, double 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 at the bottom right hand corner, as the Minister prefers pages to be loose when delivering a speech as opposed to stapled. Please include word count at the end of each speech and ensure that sections of the speech are separated using subject headings where appropriate.

5. Submission

When submitting a speech to Mr Brown's office, please send it through as a separate document from your briefing. Mr Brown prefers his briefing to be printed double sided and his speeches to be single sided. By sending them up separately, you are helping us to prepare Mr Brown's folder quickly and accurately.

6. Speaking Rate

Mr Brown speaks at 130 words per minute. Minus 20% for Parliamentary debates to allow for interventions. When preparing a closing speech for a debate please provide Mr Brown

with a strong opening and closing paragraph along with bullet points covering relevant points for the middle section of the speech.

7. Structure

A rough guide on how to prepare a 10 minute speech for Mr Brown follows. Please, where possible, follow this structure and amend it appropriately for shorter speeches. If in doubt, please don't hesitate to contact Private office - we're here to help!

Introduction - 1 minute

- Try to connect with the audience - praise the host or say something about the location

Beginning - 1- 2 minutes

- Try to grab the audience's attention - use a headline, joke, quote, anecdote, has Mr Brown met the group/organisers/host before? Please do not agonise over trying to make the speech funny, Mr Brown will add personal anecdotes where appropriate.

Middle - 7- 9 minutes

- Aim for no more than three key messages in your speech. When deciding on these key messages, please take into consideration the audience and the key policy messages that they would like to hear. Please consult widely across the Scottish Government to ensure that your key messages are relevant, accurate and up to date.

End - 1 - 2 minutes

- Re-cap on the main points and aim for a strong finish, saving the best lines for last.

8. Questions

Mr Brown is occasionally asked 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 Mr Brown should not take questions. If it is suitable to take questions, please ensure that you inform Private Office at the earliest opportunity and that your briefing includes a note on any particularly contentious or difficult issues that are likely to be raised and relevant lines to take.

Parliamentary Questions

- Please note that the Presiding Officer has requested that all answers to oral PQs are kept as brief as possible. Please bear this in mind when preparing answers to oral PQs for Mr Brown and consider carefully what really needs to be in the main answer, and what could reasonably be put into the background note. As a general rule, answers should only be around four or five lines long.
- Please keep answers simple, straightforward and to the point. Please include a background note where appropriate. Complex quotes, tables and text in italics should also be avoided.

- Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs - it is often the most obvious questions that are missed.
- When written PQs request information, which is publicly available or has been supplied in an earlier PQ answer, the Minister is keen that the standard replies are used.
- Mr Brown has asked that officials consider carefully any recent media coverage on the subject of PQs that he is being asked to answer and make reference to the coverage, and lines to take, in the answer.
- The Minister also prefers his background briefing for supplementary questions to be in Q&A format.

Richard Lochhead MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & the Environment

Responsibilities include:

- Agriculture
- Fisheries and Rural Development
- Environment and Natural Heritage
- Land Reform
- Water quality regulation and sustainable development

Box times

- Mr Lochhead's box will close at **4pm on THURSDAY** evenings.
- Mr Lochhead routinely takes a box on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.
- In addition - Mr Lochhead tends not to look at routine papers through the week and prefers to clear these over the weekend, therefore, if you have sent a routine submission earlier on in the week, it is more than likely that it will not come back until the following week.

Biography

Richard Lochhead was born in Paisley 1969 and raised in Clarkston in the Southside of Glasgow. He attended Williamwood High School in Clarkston, Glasgow College of Commerce, where he gained an HNC in Business Studies, and the University of Stirling where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in Political Studies.

His first job was with the South of Scotland Electricity Board and immediately prior to his election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, he worked as an economic development officer for Dundee City Council.

He joined the Scottish National Party while still at school in the early 1980s and worked for a period as Office Manager for Alex Salmond MP.

In 1999 Richard was elected to the Scottish Parliament as a North East MSP. He stood down from his regional seat to fight and win the Moray constituency by-election in April 2006.

He was SNP spokesman on Environment, Energy, Rural Affairs and Fishing. He was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment in May 2007.

Mr Lochhead lives in Elgin with his wife and two sons. He enjoys reading history and fiction, cycling, and cinema.

Communications Team and Special Advisers

For any engagement that the Minister 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 Greener Communications Team are copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Advisers

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions.

Alex Bell is the first point of contact for the Environment Portfolio.

Box Arrangements

Mr Lochhead's box will close at **4pm on THURSDAY** evenings. The Cabinet Secretary lives in Elgin and is in his constituency on a Friday so this is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.

Mr Lochhead routinely takes a box on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. However, he does prefer to clear papers over the weekend, therefore, if you have sent a routine submission earlier on in the week, it is more than likely that it will not come back until the following week.

Diary

When you call the office to enquire about the Cabinet Secretary's availability, we can suggest dates, but we will not reserve time in the diary. Office policy is not to put anything into the diary without the Cabinet Secretary's formal agreement. The following table illustrates his availability in a 'typical' week:

Monday	Constituency Business	Generally, the Cabinet Secretary is not available for Ministerial business. He is usually based in his constituency in Elgin.
Tuesday AM	Travel	The Cabinet Secretary travels down from his home in Elgin. He may attend meetings and Ministerial visits on his way down to Edinburgh.
Tuesday PM		
SAH/Bute House	Cabinet	The Cabinet Secretary attends the Pre-Cabinet and Cabinet meetings, which are usually held in Bute House.
Wednesday AM	Ministerial Meetings	Possible Ministerial meetings/visits taking place.
Holyrood		
Wednesday PM	Parliamentary Business	Due to the unpredictable nature of Parliamentary business, it is difficult to arrange meetings and engagements between 14:30 and 17:00. Any meetings arranged can be cancelled at short notice.
Holyrood		
Thursday	Parliamentary Business	See above for meetings arranged between 09:30-12:00 and 14:00-17:00. We do not accept engagements over Question Time if it is the Cabinet Secretary's themed week.
Holyrood		
		The Cabinet Secretary prefers to finish all paper work before leaving on a Thursday, but only if time allows.

Friday Constituency He is based in his constituency in Elgin on Fridays.
Business

If the engagement is not being dealt with through MACCS, then the Cabinet Secretary's agreement should be sought through a short submission with as much information as possible (e.g. date, time, location, purpose, key messages, etc.).

When the Cabinet Secretary agrees to undertake an engagement or meeting, the Cabinet Secretary's Diary Secretary will be in touch to confirm the agreed time, and will send the meeting request to the Action Officer, Head of Branch and Comms Greener. It is extremely important that any change to the time or location are cleared with the Diary Secretary first - Mr Lochhead's diary is very busy and changes of even half an hour either way can cause real problems!

Please ensure that we have the full address (including postcode) of the place that the Cabinet Secretary is visiting **at least 3 weeks in advance**. This is required so that the Diary Secretary can issue courtesy e-mails to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that the Cabinet Secretary will be in their constituency.

Submissions

All minutes to Minister should have a clear purpose and conclusion. The Cabinet Secretary should be able to look at a submission and tell quickly from the Conclusion paragraph what he is required to do i.e. Agree, state that he is content, Note, etc. Please note that the actual covering minute should **not** be more than two pages long.

Other useful points to note:

- Ensure that all relevant Ministers, DGs, Communications Teams and SPADS are copied in.
- Remove all template comments.
- Have correct timing - Routine/Urgent/Immediate. Immediate Minutes should have IMMEDIATE in the subject box of the accompanying email and a courtesy phone call should be made to Private Office to alert us and also check that the Cabinet Secretary is available to clear it. Consideration should also be given to recess, holidays and weekends.
- **Immediate - within 24 hours; Urgent - within 3 working days; Routine - within 7 working days.**
- Security Markings - should be accurate and reflect what is in the public domain and what is not.
- Please proof read all material to correct grammar and spelling. Remember also that the Cabinet Secretary may not know what some abbreviations stand for - best to spell it out full at least once.
- Submissions should be sent via e-mail in word format. Please avoid sending objective links as it is difficult sometimes to know which version to print off.
- When sending annexes please indicate in the covering e-mail how many pages in length each is. This avoids us causing paper jams on the Parliament printers during busy periods.

There is guidance on the intranet on preparing Minutes to Ministers, this should be adhered to as much as possible.

When sending a submission to one Rural Minister, please ensure the other portfolio Cabinet Secretary or Minister is also copied in - either on a 1:2 basis or by side copy depending on the split of responsibilities between Mr Lochhead and Mr Stevenson.

1:2 Submissions

As the Cabinet Secretary, Mr Lochhead is ultimately responsible for all matters within the RAE Portfolio. Mr Stevenson has lead responsibility for some of the portfolio. This means it is critical that both the Cabinet Secretary and lead Minister are involved in all aspects of policy development for those areas. To achieve this submissions that require the Cabinet Secretary and the lead Minister to **make a decision** should be submitted on a 1:2 basis as below:

1. Minister for Environment
2. Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Where 1:2 submissions are used Private Office will collate both the Cabinet Secretary and Minister's responses and provide a single response to officials.

1:2 Submissions should not be used where a decision is not required

Please use the one page submission template wherever possible, ensuring that any financial implications and sensitivities are highlighted in the covering minute. All submissions should be copied to *DG Rural Affairs Environment and Services* and relevant colleagues (including press and special advisors) as appropriate. When offering a copy list in a draft minute it is helpful if you can provide full names - there are a number of Mr Smiths in the office!

Briefings

Once a meeting or engagement is confirmed in the Cabinet Secretary's diary, the Diary Secretary will send out a briefing request to the lead official(s). This e-mail will give specific timescales for when the briefing is required. If you feel this should be passed on to another team/individual please do so making Private Office aware of who is now responsible for pulling the briefing together. All regular briefing is expected to be with Private Office at least **1 week** in advance, although the deadlines may require more time depending on box arrangements for that week.

Where there are any concerns regarding a deadline, please call the Diary Secretary to discuss. Ideally if you are awaiting one or two pieces of information, a draft briefing should be submitted and a new version of the full pack can be sent to Private Office once the new information is received.

Where a speech needs to be drafted, it is helpful to have a first draft of the speech and briefing **two weeks** prior to the event. This will minimise the need for last minute requests for changes or further information.

If the Cabinet Secretary is making a visit, Private Office will require the full postal address (including postcode) at least **ten days** in advance, to allow us to notify MSPs and MPs that Mr Lochhead will be in their area.

If a briefing pack has been sent to Private Office (e.g. for a debate) and there is further or amended briefing to come, a revised briefing pack should be sent. All briefing should be sent as one single word document separated into annexes.

Engagements

Please use the engagement template for all engagement briefing. This will ensure that we have a map (where necessary), postcodes, contact names and numbers. Any official attending an event with the Cabinet Secretary should note their mobile number in the briefing, and have this 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. A member of Private Office and/or Communications Greener usually attend external events with the Cabinet Secretary. It is useful if you let the organisers know this.

It should be assumed that a policy official will be required to be in attendance at all engagements/meetings involving the Cabinet Secretary unless Private Office state otherwise.

Meetings

Please note that when attending a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary someone should take a note of the meeting. Private Office do not minute a meeting, they are only required to ensure that Ministerial actions 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.

Rooms in the Parliament will not be booked until the number of attendees is known. It is the responsibility of the official to provide attendee numbers at least **2 weeks** prior to the meeting.

It should be assumed that a policy official will be required to be in attendance at all engagements/meetings involving the Cabinet Secretary unless Private Office state otherwise.

Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to Green Folder correspondence. The Cabinet Secretary and Private Office appreciate the high quality of drafts that are received and the excellent stats that the RAE Directorate have for processing MACCS cases.

Often it is the case that Private Office amend MACCS cases at our end, whether it be formatting, spelling or grammar before the Cabinet Secretary sees it. It is useful if you compare the scanned signed version with that which you originally sent up to Private Office - this will let you see what changes have been made and give you a better inkling of the Cabinet Secretary's style.

Consideration should be given to the fact that there is a new administration in office. It may not be the case that policy follows the same direction as pre-May 2007.

Please note preferences differ between Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and First Minister.

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

MSP/MP/MEP - please 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'. **Please delete 'Your Ref' if no reference is provided.**

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

Address

Email - 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 as follows:

Mr Andrew B Smith

by email to

asmith@theemailaddress.co.uk

Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed.

Content

- Open the letter with some background e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x date about x topic".
- Please 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, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all the facts and figures are up to date.
- Please do not use relative dates when writing about a previous meeting or publication date, etc. For example, letters should say "x report was published on 25 February 2010" rather than "x report was published last week".

Constituents

When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Mr Lochhead's constituents (Moray - IV postcodes) as the Cabinet Secretary request Ministerial replies to all his constituents (see also Ministerial Replies below).

Co-ordinated responses

Many MACCS case are related to PQs, Press releases, etc. Please ensure that all facts and figures add up and are consistent.

Date

- Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.
- 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 Ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before he sees it.

- Delays**
- If the response is expected to issue more than 4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.
 - If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Cabinet Secretary within the PO deadline, please include a PS/Minute with the MACCS case explaining the delay.
- Font**
- The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12.
 - Please note the St Andrews House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat. These details and the text of the letter should be left-aligned.
- Diary Invitations**
- All invitations addressed to Mr Lochhead should be replied to by his Private Office, even if another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is to take on the engagement on his behalf (see also Reallocation). If another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is going to undertake an engagement, the last paragraph should ask the correspondent to contact the relevant Diary Secretary.
 - The response should **ALWAYS** include the Cabinet Secretary's full title; "Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment".
 - All diary acceptance letters should be subject to Parliamentary business [if the event is in the Parliamentary session, not recess].
 - Do not use diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it is true, especially if the event is some way off. Simply respond that the Cabinet Secretary is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.
 - MCS cases that don't have Press Office advice box completed will be rejected.

Diary responses can be very brief, unless there are specific arrangements or policy details that need to be included. Generic examples are suggested below:

DIARY ACCEPT

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2010 inviting Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, to launch the Food Choices Campaign in Dundee on 29 February 2010.

The Cabinet Secretary would be delighted to accept your invitation, subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact his Diary Secretary to finalise arrangements.

Private Secretary

DIARY DECLINE

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2010 inviting Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, to speak at your Awards Dinner on 27 February 2010.

Unfortunately, due to existing diary commitments, the Cabinet Secretary will be unable to attend. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful evening.

Private Secretary

- 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 PO has indicated otherwise.
- Always include a completed PS diary template, including background details and advice from officials and special advisers.
- Responses should be in the Private Secretary's name, unless the correspondent is a politician, or Private Office specifically say that Mr Lochhead knows the correspondent personally.
- The Private Secretary does not say "I have been asked to respond on the Cabinet Secretary's behalf" in a letter - this language should be for official replies only.

- Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.
- Ensure that the reply is clear, concise and written in a language that is easily understood.
- 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.....".
- Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.
- If a case is reallocated to Richard Lochhead for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for x issue" should be used.
- Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately". Where possible, Mr Lochhead prefers to use positive phrases and avoid negative terms.
- 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".
- Where appropriate add "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.

Language

Layout

- Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to

do so.

- Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.
- Please leave at least 5 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow Mr Lochhead to personally write the greeting and signature.
- If, due to the above formatting, the Cabinet Secretary's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that if possible the last paragraph is moved onto the second page.
- Please 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.....".
- Please do not use paragraph numbering.
- Ensure that **unused text boxes are removed** as these will appear in the final draft i.e. <<text>>.
- As above, please **remove 'Ref no'** where there is no reference on the incoming letter.
- Please ensure that the Cabinet Secretary's name at the bottom of the letter is left aligned and in bold and capitals " **RICHARD LOCHHEAD**".

Ministerial Replies

Mr Lochhead wishes to sign all letters to his constituents.

Official Replies

Please include "I have been asked by Mr Lochhead to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.

Reallocation

GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Lochhead 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 x subject".

Signature

Letters for the Cabinet Secretary's signature

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

Letters for PS/Mr Lochhead's signature

Spelling

Private Secretary

Please use the spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.

Timing

Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Cabinet Secretary 3 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, if necessary.

Titles

- Please include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener.
- If responding to a Councillor, please address him/he as such. If they have another title such as Convener/Chairperson, this should also be included.
- Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.

- Do not use Esquire after a name.

Main contact point for MACCS:

Correspondent Secretary

And finally

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. One of us is almost always available to assist in answering your queries and by asking first, time can often be saved later on in rectifying mistakes. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the RAE Directorates who want to know what goes on in the Private Office.

Speeches

- If Mr Lochhead is just making short introductory remarks or a more informal speech then bullet points with the key facts and statistical information are fine as opposed to a more fulsome speaking note.
- If Mr Lochhead is speaking for more than 5-7 minutes, or the speech is in a formal setting, e.g. conferences, Parliament, and is likely to be released to the press, Mr Lochhead will want a formal and structured speech.
- Use short sentences.
- Avoid technical jargon.
- Read the speech out loud several times before submitting to make sure that it is easily readable and that the sentence structure flows well.
- Formatting - **Ariel 16 Bold - 1.5 line spacing - numbered paragraphs and pages - headings underlined - word count at the end - 'Check Against Delivery' - in the header - do not let paragraphs run over two pages.**
- Mr Lochhead speaks at around 150 words per minute.
- When writing speeches for debates please remember to leave time in for interventions.
- Mr Lochhead likes to have time to consider his speeches and to put his own stamp on them so don't feel put out if he makes changes.
- Please, please get speeches up **at least one week** in advance of the date the Cabinet Secretary is due to make them, preferably before the weekend box the Thursday before. This will give Mr Lochhead time to consider the content and to come back to you with comments and more importantly will give you more time to make any changes.

Content

- **Make the speech relevant to the audience** - the speech must match the audience. What will the audience want to hear about? Please do not recycle an old speech on the same subject, or one prepared for a different Minister. Call the organisers or people who are going to the event to find out what they want to hear. Do not go into huge detail on the mechanics of policy implementation.
- **Include the big picture context** - start and end with the big picture. Both the beginning and the end of the speech are equally important. Include some relevant

context, especially in the introduction. The big picture issues for Mr Lochhead are climate change, the recession, the economic recovery, energy security, food security, land use, the Referendum Bill and sustainability.

- **Cover hot issues and topical subjects** - there should, in addition, be a press line in all speeches - discuss potential announcements with Comms colleagues. What are the 5 key messages you want the Cabinet Secretary to convey?
- **Add some colour to the speech** - personalise the speech, include testimonials where possible. For example: I was in the chamber yesterday / when I was in Luxembourg / The Cabinet Secretary likes examples and case studies included in speeches, he wants hard facts and figures, and trends since 2007 to be included where possible. He particularly likes comparisons (such as from this time last year or in the last session), and positive differences in Scotland and comparison with the UK/England (or wider).

Style

- **Be positive** - avoid the passive. The speech should have a positive upbeat tone.
- **Paragraphs** - must open with a line that links to the subject of the previous paragraph. The same applies to links between sections. **Speeches must flow.**
- **Avoid repetition** phrases and names and avoid acronyms.
- **Use short sentences and paragraphs** - Mr Lochhead likes to look at the audience when delivering a speech. Long sentences and paragraphs make this difficult for him.
- Speeches must end with short and punchy statements to **summarise the key messages.**

Finally

Please read the speech aloud - does it sound natural? Have you covered all the points above? Your draft should be approved at Deputy Director level before it is forwarded to Private Office.

Parliamentary Questions

Oral PQs

When drafting an Oral PQ please pay attention to the wording. It is difficult to read out long wordy answers. Complex quotes and tables should be avoided. Answers should be no more than four - five lines long, simple and to the point. Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting Oral PQs. Often, the most obvious questions are missed.

Mr Lochhead likes the following to be included in this order:

Supplementary Q & A

Text should be in **Arial size 16** - not in newspaper column format. Make use of bold text to make key points stand out. Please also include positive key facts - this enables Ministers to rebut criticisms and turn question into an opportunity to present policy favourably. Try to keep this brief - 1 or 2 pages should suffice.

Background Information

One page of background detailing the hot issues and SG lines. Paragraphs should be numbered and the first paragraph should detail who is asking the question and why they are asking it.

Key Facts and Figures

One page of key facts and figures. Mr Lochhead likes comparison figures - compared to this time last year/last decade/last administration - as relevant.

Please ensure that the drafter of the PQ or someone else familiar with the subject is **contactable on the Thursday the PQ is to be answered**. Mr Lochhead may require last minutes info.

The drafter of the PQ should also watch Ministers deliver the answer (or check the Official Report afterwards). This will let you see the Cabinet Secretary's style and also alert Private Office if an inaccuracy has been made that we need to correct.

- **For Oral PQs, please ensure that you are available on the Thursday morning (and early afternoon for Themed Questions) to make drafting changes or to answer any questions the Cabinet Secretary may have before he stands up in the Chamber.**
- Correct contact numbers should be provided for Themed Questions.

Written PQs

Mr Lochhead wishes to be as helpful as possible to members in written answers. Answers such as 'None' or 'This information is not held centrally' should not be used on their own. A further helpful statement should also be included, where possible. The Cabinet Secretary 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 DG Rural Affairs Environment and Services.

Please do not put See Background Note to S3W-XXXX in a background note, it should be copied over for ease of reference.

Please refer to the Scottish Government not the Scottish Executive.

Stewart Stevenson MSP
Minister for Environment & Climate Change

Responsibilities include:

- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Biodiversity
- Crofting
- National Parks and Environmental Justice
- Flooding
- SNH
- SEPA
- Aquaculture

Box Times

- Mr Stevenson's box closes at **4pm on Monday to Thursday**. The Minister's last box of the week closes at **4pm on Thursday** evenings.
- The Minister lives in Banff and is generally in his constituency on a Friday so this is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.

Biography

Stewart Stevenson is MSP for Banffshire and the Buchan Coast.

Born in 1946 and brought up in Cupar, Fife, Mr Stevenson studied Mathematics at the University of Aberdeen, graduating in 1969.

Three decades later he retired from Bank of Scotland as a Technology Director and was first elected to the Scottish Parliament in 2001 having joined the SNP in 1961.

He was Transport Minister for most of the 2007-2011 administration and was appointed to his current post after being re-elected at the 5th May 2011 election

Communications Team and Special Advisers

For any engagement that the Minister 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 the Greener Communications Team are copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Advisers

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions.

Alex Bell is the first point of contact for the Environment Portfolio.

Submissions

Submissions for Mr Stevenson should be typed on the '*Ministerial Submissions Template*'.

- Please always write out acronyms in full before you abbreviate them throughout the text.
- Use plain English.
- Private Office plea - **Please do not embed files in the word document you send up** - we run off literally hundreds of papers every day and will not necessarily spot them until it is too late. Similarly if you are sending up letters as part of a submission it would be helpful if these could be attached as separate documents (**without headers and footers marking them as annexes**) and that you ensure that they are on the correct templates and that the addresses are correct.
- Annexes should be marked A, B, C etc and should also have appropriate titles. **Do not include any letters to be signed by the Minister as an Annex** - this should be attached as a separate document.
- Please think carefully about the priority of your submission, if there is a time limit on the response and it is absolutely critical that you get a quick turnaround, by all means add an **immediate** marking in the Subject heading of your email message. Where this is the case I would also advise that you call Private Office to draw our attention to the submission and to ensure that we are able to get this in front of the Minister. As you know we can frequently be away from the office and deal with such large volumes that it helps if we know what to look out for and when.
- Please ensure that your submissions are clearly marked with their priority: **routine** (no sooner than 3 working days), **urgent** (within 3 working days) or **immediate** (within 24 hours). These should also be given a specific deadline for a response. As previously mentioned it is helpful to contact Private Office by phone to alert them to **immediate** submissions.
- All recommendations; decisions required and conclusions should be typed in **BOLD**.
- **Please note** : it would be helpful if **revised** notes or papers, etc be put up in a form that indicates the sections which have been revised.

Proof reading : More than any other action, checking the spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response times. This includes the readability of the text and the formatting of any letters, particularly in relation to MACCS cases and PQs.

Briefings

Events

Briefing for Mr Stevenson should be with Private Office one week in advance of the engagement, unless a specific date has been given - for major speeches and announcements an outline or draft may be required much further in advance.

Please note the deadlines which are set are there to ensure that Mr Stevenson can consider briefings or speaking notes ahead of events and request further information he may require in advance of the event.

If you are sending up a revision to an element of the briefing pack please send up a fresh clean copy of the pack. This ensures that the correct version goes into Mr Stevenson and helps us manage his papers more effectively.

The key points which the Minister wishes to be included are:

- details of whom the Minister is meeting/who the key people are
- who the audience will be
- suggested lines to hold on each agenda or topic that might be raised
- relevant facts and figures/current issues
- where Mr Stevenson is chairing more formal meetings, please provide a steering brief for him to use
- running order
- always consider whether a Press Release is appropriate

Please use the attached covering sheet for speeches or events. This should be at the start of the briefing pack. This sheet provides Mr Stevenson and his Private Office, with key information for any event.

Meetings

1. Ensure that you arrive in plenty of time for meetings, particularly at Parliament as getting through security can be problematic.
2. Private Office need to know exactly who is coming to each Ministerial meeting so that the room size/catering, etc is accurate, please keep the Diary Secretary informed.
3. The Minister likes steering briefs to be clear, with all preferred papers attached for his information and analysis for before and during the meetings.

NB: It is useful to know when people need to be signed into Parliament and when they have their own Parliamentary passes.

It is helpful for Private Office to know which officials are attending meetings to ensure an appropriate room is booked. Please ensure you accept meeting requests and give suggestions for other attendees to Private Office as early as possible. If there are any changes to the attendees please let the Diary Secretary know.

Please arrive around fifteen minutes early for meetings with the Minister to allow internal meetings to start earlier if time allows and to allow time for a discussion with the Minister before external meeting (even if a pre meeting has already taken place).

Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to Green Folder correspondence. The Minister and Private Office appreciate the high quality of drafts that are received and the excellent information that the Environment Directorate have for processing MACCS cases.

Often it is the case that Private Office amend MACCS cases at our end, whether it be formatting, spelling or grammar before the Minister sees it. **However, please ensure you always spell check and read your correspondence over before sending up to Private Office.** It is useful if you compare the scanned signed version with that which you originally sent up to Private Office - this will let you see what changes have been made and give you a better inkling of the Minister's style.

Please note preferences differ between Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and the First Minister.

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

MSPs - please use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSP's 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'.

Address **Constituents** - when an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please 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, 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.

Contact Details When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)

- Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about.....".
- Please ensure the response answers the point raised by the correspondent.
- Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.

Content

- 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.

Constituents When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Mr Stevenson's constituents (Banffshire & Buchan Coast) as the Minister requests Ministerial replies to all of his constituents (see also Ministerial Replies below).

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

Date

- Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.
- 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 Ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before she sees it.

Delays

- If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.
- If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.

Diary Invitations

- All invitations addressed to Mr Stevenson should be replied to by his Private Office, even if another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is to take on the engagement on his behalf (see also reallocation). 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 [if the event is in the Parliamentary session, not recess].
- Do not use diary commitments or Parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it is true, especially if the event is some way off. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.
- Diary responses can be brief, unless there are specific arrangements or policy details that need to be included. Generic examples are suggested below:

DIARY ACCEPT

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, to attend your Annual Conference.

Mr Stevenson would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary to agree a mutually convenient date / make the necessary arrangements.

Private Secretary

DIARY DECLINE

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, to attend your Annual Conference on 1 April 2008.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Mr Stevenson will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

Private Secretary

- 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 PO 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 Mr Stevenson wants to accept invites that add value and fits 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 Mr Stevenson 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.

Font

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

Language

- Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.
- Ensure that the reply is clear, concise and written in a language that is easily understood.
- 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.....".
- Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.
- If a case is reallocated to Stewart Stevenson for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility" should be used.
- Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately".
- 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".
- 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.
- Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.
- Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and his signature.
- 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.
- 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.....".
- Please do not use paragraph numbering.
- **Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e.. <<text>>.**
- Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals

STEWART STEVENSON

Ministerial Replies Official

Mr Stevenson wishes to sign all letters to his constituents.

Please include "I have been asked by Mr Stevenson to thank you for your

Replies letter of day/month and to reply on his behalf" or a similar form of words.
GFs can be reallocated so that Mr Stevenson is answering on behalf of the
Reallocation 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".

Signature Letters for the Minister's signature **STEWART STEVENSON**
Letters for PS/MR Stevenson's signature **Private Secretary**

Spelling **IMPORTANT - Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.**

Timing Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.

- Please 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 be included.

Titles

- Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.
- Do not use Esquire after a name.
- Where possible, and if known, indicate the correspondent's option for address e.g. Dear Bob as familiar for Robert.

Main Contact Point for MCS:

Diary Secretary for Stewart Stevenson

And finally

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. One of us is almost always available to assist in answering your queries and by asking first, time can often be saved later on in rectifying mistakes. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Environment portfolio who want to know what goes on in Private Office.

Diary

When you call the office to enquire about the Minister's availability, we can suggest dates but we will not reserve time in the diary. Office policy is not to put anything into the diary without the Minister's formal agreement. The following table illustrates his availability in a "typical" week:

Monday	Meetings	Ministerial meetings/visits.
Tuesday	Meetings	Ministerial meetings/visits.

SAH

Wednesday

AM

Ministerial Meetings Ministerial meetings/visits - AM

Holyrood

Wednesday

PM

Parliamentary
Business

Business/internal meetings - PM

Holyrood

Thursday

Parliamentary
Business

Internal meetings only

Holyrood

Friday

Constituency
Business

Generally, the Minister is not available for Ministerial business.

If the engagement is not being dealt with through the MACCS, then the Minister's agreement should be sought through a short submission with as much information as possible (e.g. date, time, location, purpose, key messages etc.)

When the Minister agrees to undertake an engagement or meeting the Minister's Diary Secretary will be in touch to confirm the agreed time, and will send the meeting request to the Action Officer, Head of Branch, Comms Greener and DG Enterprise & Environment. It is extremely important that any change to the time or location are cleared with Gemma first - Mr Stevenson's diary is very busy and changes of even half an hour either way can cause real problems!

Please ensure that we have the full address (including postcode) of the place that the Minister is visiting as soon as possible. This is required so that the Diary Secretary can issue courtesy e-mails to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that the Minister will be in their constituency.

Speeches

- Mr Stevenson always adds his own comments to speeches. Depending on the type of event, Mr Stevenson may wish to have short paragraphs or bullet points that he can embellish with his own style rather than a fully worked up speech to be delivered word for word. The Minister will often set the scene for a speech by adding his own anecdotes so the bare facts laid out clearly and in short sentences are generally all that is needed.
- The exception to this rule are big set piece speeches. On such occasions please contact private office to set up an initial chat about the content of the speech before drafting. The Minister will want to be clear about the direction and content of the bigger set piece speeches. Full speeches should be sent in draft no later than **1 week** before an event as the Minister will wish to read - ask questions, and more often than not, will make revisions.
- Avoid technical jargon unless it is suitable for that particular audience
- Formatting:

- **Arial 20 Bold - 1.5 line spacing numbered paragraphs and pages - headings underlined - word count at end - do not let paragraphs run over two pages.**
- New subject heading - new page.
- Because the Minister tends not to read speeches word for word and frequently ad-libs it can be difficult to know how much material to provide, in particular for speeches in the Parliament that have strict timings. As a rough guide, he speaks at a rate of 125 words per minute. When providing speeches for debates time for interventions should be taken in to account.
- **The last 40 seconds (80 - 85 words) of a Parliamentary Speech should start on a new page headed "END".**
- Mr Stevenson likes to have time to consider his speeches and to put his own stamp on them so don't feel put out if he makes changes.
- Prepare a Q & A for all speaking events as the Minister is often asked without warning at an event to give a Q & A so it is useful to have one prepared.
- Please consider the audience e.g. young people or academics.
- **Please do a spell check.**

Parliamentary Questions

- Mr Stevenson is happy with the standard of PQ answers coming up from the portfolio. The only general things he asks for are that people, while answering PQs should be as helpful as possible, they should not answer questions not asked and ensure that their answer reflects the Government position and bear in mind the politics of the question, i.e. who is asking it, is this one of a series of questions on a similar issue, has there been correspondence on the same subject from this MSP or their constituents etc.
- **For Oral PQs, please ensure that you are available on the Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning (and early afternoon for Themed Questions) to make drafting changes or to answer any questions the Minister may have before he stands up in the chamber.**
- Correct contact numbers should be provided for Themed Questions as the Minister may telephone the responsible official directly to discuss.

E-mails

All e-mails should be sent to Minister for Environment mailbox, **NOT** to personal mailboxes.

When responding to a query from the Private Office, it is very helpful if you refer to the original query as this helps us to associate papers. It is also extremely useful if the title of the e-mail is self-explanatory, and the same as the title of any attached submissions. This allows us to find the correspondence much more quickly - we often have one or two thousand e-mails in the mailbox plus archived material to search!

If you are sending an urgent or immediate e-mail that needs to be seen straight away, please telephone the Private Office in advance of sending the minute so that we know to check the mailbox and put IMMEDIATE in the Subject heading.

E-mails to accompany submissions

When sending up a submission to Mr Stevenson please provide a clear title in the Subject line of the e-mail as appropriate (i.e. with a description of what is contained within the email) and timescale (i.e. Immediate, Urgent, etc).

In the body of the e-mail please indicate the timing of the minute; which Minister is required to take a decision or is the lead Minister and the subject matter.

Issuing documents by e-mail

When issuing documents by e-mail, in particular externally, please ensure that you have gone into the document to accept all track changes and saved it as new. Whilst an attachment may look 'clean' on your screen before issue, all amendments and their history will be shown on the recipient's computer if they have track changes automatically switched on. This can be potentially embarrassing if the document has contained anything confidential or been significantly amended.

Tips & Advice

We are grateful for the support we get from all our colleagues across Environment - from MACCS cases to providing assistance at stakeholders meetings. Below are a few of the more regular, minor issues we encounter and it would be really appreciated if you could bear them in mind across the range of issues we deal with day to day.

Correspondence

- Officials should always carry out a spelling and grammar check on each piece of briefing; letters; PS Minutes; emails and news releases that will be considered by the Minister.
- Within all correspondence, always write in short sentences which use plain English and avoid jargon. Please spell 'Convener' using the Scottish spelling. Please ensure that you are careful when using 'they're', 'their' and 'there' and 'its' and 'it's' - we all do it!
- Please do not use abbreviations or acronyms without defining them - we have so many that it is easy to lose the recipient.
- Letters for the Minister/PS' signature - at the top of the letter, please insert the month and year only; and leave enough space to handwrite the actual day of signature. When nearing the end of the month, please date the response for the following month.

Briefing/Event Support

- Please consider the size of briefing when making a submission. Not only can there be an overload of information at times but there also needs to be marking and tagging done to every document - so with a large submission more allowance at the Private Office side is required for meeting deadlines/box closure times.
- Please consider who will be reading a letter or listening to a speech e.g. young people or academics.

General

- If you or a colleague need to be signed into Parliament for meetings etc. please ensure that you let Private Office know in advance so that someone will be available to sign you in.
- Please don't put any embedded documents within submissions that you send to Private Office - they can cause delays in hardware performance.
- When sending Objective links, please always include a Word version of the document as well - as there can be access issues.

And Finally

We are here to support to provide as much assistance as we can to you so please do not hesitate to give any of us a call.

If you would find it helpful to learn more about the work we do in Private Office we are always happy to come to divisional meetings and answer questions - just ask.

All of the Environment Private Office team appreciate your support and attention to these preferences and hopefully we have covered most matters but if there is anything else we can assist with feel free to contact anyone in the team.

Kenny MacAskill MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Justice

Responsibilities include:

- Police
- Football legislation and Joint Action Group
- Prisons and sentencing policy
- Reducing reoffending
- Victims and witnesses
- Life sentence prisoner casework
- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Criminal justice social work and system reform
- Legal Aid and Legal Profession
- Youth justice
- Liquor Licensing
- Resilience

Box Times

- As Mr MacAskill is based in Edinburgh he does not receive a box. Instead papers are fed to him throughout the working day. Generally this means that he will clear all papers within 24 hours of receipt.
- On days where Mr MacAskill is based in the Parliament on Constituency Business (generally Monday and Friday) we only forward immediate correspondence. All other correspondence is held over to the next working day.

Biography

Mr MacAskill was an MSP for the Lothians from 1999 to 2007 and was elected as MSP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh at the Scottish Elections in 2007. He served as Cabinet Secretary for Justice throughout the four years of that administration and was re-appointed to the role following his election as the MSP for Edinburgh Eastern on May 5th 2011

He was born in Edinburgh on April 28 1958, and has previously been Shadow Justice and Home Affairs Minister. He was a long standing member of the SNP's NEC and has been National Treasurer and Vice Convener of Policy.

He was educated at Linlithgow Academy and Edinburgh University and was a senior partner in a law firm. In 2004 Kenny wrote a book entitled 'Building a Nation - Post Devolution Nationalism in Scotland'. He has since edited another book 'Agenda for a New Scotland - Visions of Scotland 2020' and has co-authored two books on the Scottish Diaspora, 'Global Scots - Voices From Afar' and 'Wherever the Saltire Flies' with the former First Minister Henry McLeish.

Communications and Special Advisers

For any engagement that the Minister 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 Communication Justice are copied into all submissions and

briefing.

Special Advisers

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions.

John McFarlane is the first point of contact for the Justice Portfolio.

For High Profile/Media Issues contact Kevin Pringle/Stuart Nicolson.

Box Arrangements

As Mr MacAskill is based in Edinburgh he does not receive a box. Instead we feed papers to him throughout the working day. Generally this means that he will clear all papers within 24 hours of receipt.

On days where he is based in the Parliament on Constituency Business (generally Monday and Friday) we only forward immediate correspondence. All other correspondence is held over to the next working day - this means that, where possible, you should avoid sending significant or immediate documents to the Cabinet Secretary on a Friday.

If you do have something particularly urgent for the Cabinet Secretary it is always helpful if you call the Private Secretary to alert them. Private Office will always do their best to make sure that Mr MacAskill receives your papers.

As Mr MacAskill is not always in St Andrews House, please let us know immediately if the Cabinet Secretary is required to sign Orders, Regulations or Warrants so that we can make arrangements for these to be signed.

Submissions

- Mr MacAskill likes short factual information. He prefers the style of submission where the key issues are summarised on the first page and detailed information is included in annexes. **Less is more.**
- Please use the full names of officials on copy lists.
- When sending a submission to the Cabinet Secretary, **you must always copy it to Ms Cunningham for information.** If it is a significant decision you should make a specific statement in the first page that Ms Cunningham may wish to comment before Mr MacAskill makes a final decision.
- Please ensure that submissions are clearly marked with their priority: **routine** (no sooner than 3 working days), **urgent** (within 3 working days) or **immediate** (within 24 hours). These should also be given a specific deadline for a response. It is also helpful to contact private office by phone to alert them to **immediate** submissions.
- Please do not embed letters within a submission. Please send as a separate document.

Timing: Please ensure that any type of submission comes up with enough time to make amendments or to allow for further discussion if necessary. Please remember that Mr MacAskill is only in SAH at certain times and we are not always able to get papers directly to him. If an immediate submission is unavoidable, it is very helpful to include an explanation for the delay.

Proof Reading : More than any other action, checking spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response times. This includes the readability of the text and the formatting of any letters, particularly in relation to MACCS cases and PQs.

Briefings

It is vital that the Private Office has enough time to deal with briefing and speaking notes. Ideally speeches and briefing for engagements should arrive **FIVE clear working days in advance** - this is to allow the Cabinet Secretary to have enough time to request amendments or additional briefing. It also allows time for Comms Safer and Stronger to consider any likely press involvement.

For Parliamentary debates and similar high profile events (where a lot of briefing is required) it is very helpful if officials can prepare a single sided 'flagged and tagged' hard back folder which is clearly laid out to the Cabinet Secretary's requirements. All briefing should be available electronically. Private Office can add (or subtract) briefing notes as required. (See separate section on Parliamentary debates)

Briefing for Ministerial engagements should be submitted on the briefing template. It is important that the template is completed in full, in order that the Cabinet Secretary and PS have all the information required for the engagement.

Where a speech is required to form part of the briefing, Mr MacAskill would be happy to meet with officials to discuss the content, style etc of the speech ahead of drafting. This will minimise any re-drafting that may be required. If you would find this helpful, please call the office to arrange a suitable time.

What Private Office Needs

PS Minute

We can't emphasise enough how important this is! When briefing Mr MacAskill for an event or meeting it is important to provide details in a covering submission

- Time
- Place (full postal address including postcode)
- Programme/timings for the visit
- Name of who will meet the Cabinet Secretary when he arrives
- Official(s)/Press Officers who will be in attendance, along with their contact details on the day including their mobile numbers. This is very important if we are running late or are having problems locating the venue!
- Map and, where possible, contact details for the venue. It is also helpful to know if there is e.g. a particular entrance we should use.

Index

If a large briefing pack is necessary, it would be helpful if an index could be provided and the pages of briefing numbered to avoid having to tag each individual page.

Official Attendance

In general, Mr MacAskill prefers to have an official in attendance at an event/engagement. Officials attend to brief the Cabinet Secretary, if the need arises, and to take any feedback to the Department. However, it also provides the official with an opportunity to meet with people they may otherwise only talk to on the other end of a phone. Given you will have gone to a lot of time and effort to prepare the material, you may like to see how your briefing and speaking note have been received at the event.

Thank you letters

Please remember that 'thank you' letters must be sent out no later than three days after the visit. Please ensure drafts are sent to Cabinet Secretary.

Correspondence

Ministerial Replies

Mr MacAskill prefers to respond personally to the following correspondents:

- His own Constituents (Edinburgh Eastern)
- Chief Executives/Chief Constables
- MSPs/MPs/MEPs
- Director/Chairpersons
- Conveners/Councillors
- Victims of Serious Crime or if the concerns are of a particularly sensitive issue

If a case is assigned to you as an Official Reply and you feel it should be a Ministerial Reply please reject the case and have this amended. Generally all other correspondence will be put forward for an official response.

Replies for MSPs/MPs/MEPs

Please use the reply address provided on the letter. Many Members of Parliament now request that replies are sent to their constituency address, especially over recess.

When the letter has been written in on behalf of a constituent, please ensure that you add the constituent's name and address in the first paragraph

E-Mails

All e-mails should be sent to Cabinet Secretary for Justice mailbox, not to personal mailboxes.

When responding to a query from the Private Office, it is very helpful if you refer to the original query as this helps us to associate papers. It is also extremely useful if the title of the e-mail is self-explanatory, and the same as the title of any attached submissions. This allows us to find the correspondence much more quickly - we often have one or two thousand emails in the inbox plus archived material to search!

If you are sending an urgent or immediate e-mail that needs to be seen straight away, please telephone the office in advance of sending the minute so that we know to check the mailbox and mark IMMEDIATE in the Subject heading.

If you are sending up a draft minute or letter which needs to be circulated or signed by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, please attach as a separate document rather than as annexes to a cover minute - it is easier for you to format and saves us disentangling the part which needs to be issued. Please always send letters on the Cabinet Secretary's template.

Diary

If you need to enquire about the Cabinet Secretary's availability please contact the diary secretary in the first instance. The following table illustrates the Cabinet Secretary's availability in a typical week:

Monday*	Ministerial/Constituency Business	This day is normally a mix of ministerial and constituency business.
Tuesday	Meetings and Cabinet	Meeting with senior officials in the early half of the morning. Cabinet takes place in the afternoon. Some external engagements may be possible
SAH		On Wednesday the Cabinet Secretary tends to be based at Holyrood therefore any meetings with officials will be arranged at the Parliament.
	Parliamentary Business	It is also possible for the Cabinet Secretary to undertake a limited number of external engagements on a Parliamentary Day.
Wednesday and		
Holyrood	Official Meetings/ Engagements	The Cabinet Secretary must be in the Parliament Chamber for 5pm for Decision time.
		Meetings outwith Holyrood on Wednesday afternoon or all day Thursday require permission/slippage by the Minister for Parliamentary Business.
		On Thursday the Cabinet Secretary tends to be based at Holyrood therefore any meetings with officials will be arranged at the Parliament.
Thursday	Parliamentary Business and	We do not accept engagements over Oral Questions & FMQs plus Justice Themed PQ which occur every 5 weeks.
Holyrood	Official Meetings/ Engagements	Meetings outwith Holyrood on Wednesday afternoon or all day Thursday require permission/slippage by the Minister for Parliamentary Business.
Friday*	Constituency Business	This is normally a constituency day. However, we do have flexibility to schedule some time for

engagements that cannot be undertaken any other day.

** It is important that you contact the Diary Secretary if you wish to organise a meeting/engagement on either of these days in advance of making any arrangements because we will need to liaise with Mr MacAskill's constituency office.*

If the engagement is not being dealt with through MACCS, then the Cabinet Secretary's agreement should be sought by way of a short email to the office, along with the template completed with as much information as possible.

When the Cabinet Secretary agrees to undertake an engagement or meeting, the Diary Secretary will be in touch to confirm the agreed time, and will send the meeting request to the Action Officer. It is extremely important that any change to the time or location are cleared with the Diary Secretary first - Mr MacAskill's diary is very busy and changes of even 15mins either way can cause real problems!

Please ensure that we have the full address (**especially the postcode**) of the place that the Cabinet Secretary is visiting **at least 2 weeks in advance**. This is required so that the Diary Secretary can issue courtesy e-mails to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that the Cabinet Secretary will be in their constituency.

Advice on Diary Cases

Mr MacAskill receives far more invitations than he can accept. There is very little time in his diary to undertake engagements so those the Cabinet Secretary accepts have to offer real returns for his time - either in terms of publicity, getting across a message to a key audience or building momentum on a priority policy area. To put this in context, we probably reject the majority of the invitations he receives. Mr MacAskill would be grateful for advice from officials prior to his considering the invitation.

He will only accept those invitations which:

- allow engagement with key stakeholders
- provide a major platform to make announcements
- could get a message across to a key audience
- provide a convenient hook for other announcements

You should also consider:

- How does this event fit into the wider media plan? **Ask Comms Safer and Stronger for their view and record their view in the PS minute** - it is helpful to include a sentence explaining why an acceptance is recommended rather than simply checking the box.
- Is he doing other similar engagements around the same time?
- Is it a day that the Cabinet Secretary is free for engagements? Check with us.
- If it is on a Friday or at a weekend, is it essential?

When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary to discuss arrangements.

Speeches

Once a time and date for an event has been agreed, the Diary Secretary will request briefing and, where appropriate, a speaking note. Particular attention should be given to whether the event is significant and the potential media attention it may attract. This will determine whether a speech or a speaking note is required.

Speeches

For formal speeches (e.g. a launch, debate, conference or announcement) a draft is required at least 1 week before the event to give the Cabinet Secretary time to read the speech and make changes if required. If Mr MacAskill is giving a major speech a pre-brief meeting will be arranged.

Speaking Notes

For informal speeches, the Cabinet Secretary prefers a short speaking note of bullet points.

Format

Once finalised, both speaking notes (including for Cabinet etc.) and speeches should be formatted in Font Arial, size 18 with 2.0 line spacing. Parliamentary speeches should also be prepared in Font Arial, size 18 with 2.0 line spacing. Page breaks should occur only at the end of a full sentence, but a paragraph can traverse two pages and pages should be numbered.

Speaking Rate

Mr MacAskill speaks at approximately 120 words per minute and paragraphs should be no more than 2 or 3 sentences long. Speeches should be no longer than 15-20 minutes. If a longer speaking slot has been requested by the event organiser it is worth suggesting that the Cabinet Secretary could speak for a shorter time but would be willing to take questions (please check this with Private Office first). Please always include a word count and note of speaking time that has been allocated at the end of the speech/speaking note.

Content

Careful consideration should be given to the audience that the Cabinet Secretary will be addressing, so that the messages and language used are appropriate. Where possible, please include examples of things Mr MacAskill has seen and done while in a Ministerial capacity. Involve Communications Safer and Stronger in drafting the speech and make use of the Justice script and momentum story scripts which they hold.

Parliamentary Statements and Debates

Mr MacAskill prefers to receive a draft statement or speech one week in advance of the Parliamentary Slot. It would be helpful if a short analysis of issues arising from the statement or debate could be prepared by lead officials for the Cabinet Secretary. It would be helpful if this note could be provided within TWO days of the event.

Parliamentary Questions

When drafting an oral PQ, please pay particular attention to wording. It is difficult to read out answers that are too long or wordy. Complex quotes, tables and text in Italics should also be avoided. Answers should be no more than four or five lines long.

Please give careful consideration to likely supplementary questions when drafting oral PQs. It is often the most obvious questions that are missed. The supplementary questions and key facts should be in Arial, 16 point and 1.5 spacing.

When submitting a draft response please include previous PQs on the same subject (from any MSP) and relevant correspondence, particularly for oral questions. If the background note is helpful to more than one PQ it should be placed within the other relevant PQ's background note area. It is also helpful if copy of previous answers are included into the background note if a previous answer is mentioned in the question

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

Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Answers should be deliverable orally rather than in written style
Background Note	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Background should include any intelligence which might help the Minister understand what's being asked, and why.Reference should be made to recent correspondence and PQs (these should not be incorporated into the note itself but included separately; see below).
Past PQs and Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The full PQ pack should include relevant past PQs and correspondence.Any previous PQs on same/related issues not only from the MSP who has submitted the Question but any others.Relevant correspondence on same/related issue from any MSP.
Key Facts/ Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any key facts/statistics should be listed in bullet point format on one page.This should be in an easily readable font size
Recent Media Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Check with Comms Safer and Stronger for any recent media interest in any related issues
Q&A Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Please ensure that this is in bullet point format (not in columns).Spaced as per speaking notes to allow the Cabinet Secretary to read out if necessary.Please allow a separate page per topic (where appropriate)

Roseanna Cunningham MSP
Minister for Community Safety & Legal Affairs

Responsibilities include:

- Community safety and anti-social behaviour
- Sectarianism
- Violence
- Human rights
- Drugs
- Civil law
- Charity law
- Fire and rescue
- Religious and faith organisations

Box times

- Ms Cunningham's box will close at **4pm Tuesday to Thursday**. She is not in the office on a Friday or Monday (as well as some Tuesdays).
- The Minister's last box of the week closes at **4pm on Thursdays**. This is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.
- The Minister will generally clear papers quickly once she has them. If the Minister is presented with an important policy paper she likes to keep a hold of it for a few days to consider properly.
- Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. Notifications of any changes will be issued well in advance.

Biography

Roseanna Cunningham was born in Glasgow in 1951, but spent most of her early years in Edinburgh and East Lothian. In 1960, she went to Australia with her family and subsequently completed her schooling in Fremantle, Western Australia and obtained her first university degree from the University of Western Australia.

She became interested in politics while still a teenager, and in fact first joined the SNP in 1969 as an overseas member.

She returned to Scotland in 1976 and within only a few months of her arrival was working full time at SNP HQ, while also being involved in branch and constituency politics in Edinburgh.

In 1980, she returned to university in Edinburgh and obtained a law degree followed by a Diploma in Legal Practice from Aberdeen University. From her graduation in 1983 to 1988 she worked as a solicitor in Local Government. After a brief period in private practice she became a member of the Faculty of Advocates.

She was elected to the House of Commons in the Perth and Kinross by-election in 1995, was re-elected in 1997 and subsequently stood successfully for the Scottish Parliament in 1999. She stood down from Westminster in 2001.

She has held a number of local and national offices in the SNP, including Deputy Leader from 2000-2004. She won "Parliamentarian of the Year" in 2000.

She has remained a member of the Scottish Parliament from 1999 to the present, and has three times been a Committee Convener - of the Justice Committee, the Health Committee and most recently the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee. She was appointed Minister for Environment in 2009.

Any spare time she has will be spent either reading or walking and sometimes both at the same time. She currently lives in her constituency in Perthshire.

Communications Team and Special Advisers

For any engagement that the Minister 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 Communication Justice are copied into all submissions and briefing.

Special Advisers

It is extremely important that the relevant Special Advisers are copied into all submissions.

John McFarlane is the first point of contact for the Justice Portfolio.

Box Arrangements

- Ms Cunningham's box closes at **4pm Tuesday to Thursday**. She is not in the office on a Friday or Monday (as well as some Tuesdays). Please take account of this and try to get any such important papers with us as soon as possible.
- The Minister's last box of the week closes at **4 pm on a Thursday**. This is the deadline for any papers that require clearance and any briefing for events that are taking place the following week.
- Speeches should be with Private Office at least **1 week** before an event as Ms Cunningham likes to make amendments and ask questions to all speaking notes.
- The Minister will generally clear papers quickly once she has them. If the Minister is presented with an important policy paper she likes to keep a hold of it for a few days to consider properly.
- If you are unable to meet a deadline please contact Private Office in advance to discuss options.
- Please note that during recess periods the box times are subject to change. You will be notified, well in advance, of any changes.

Submissions

Firstly, please consider whether a full blown minute to the Minister is necessary. If an initial chat with the Minister to guide policy development would save hours setting out a number of

options in detail, we can try to find half an hour in the diary to do so. Where it is necessary or easier to put information in a minute, please bear the following points in mind when drafting.

Submissions for Ms Cunningham should be typed on the '*Ministerial Submissions Template*'.

- Do not assume knowledge - this applies to acronyms as well as general information. Please always write out acronyms in full before you abbreviate them throughout the text.
- Use plain English.
- Private Office plea - **Please do not embed files in the word document you send up** - we run off literally hundreds of papers every day and will not necessarily spot them until it is too late. Similarly if you are sending up letters as part of a submission it would be helpful if these could be attached as separate documents (**without headers and footers marking them as annexes**) and that you ensure that they are on the correct templates and that the addresses are correct.
- Annexes should be marked A, B, C etc and should also have appropriate titles. **Do not include any letters to be signed by the Minister as an Annex** - this should be attached as a separate document.
- Please think carefully about the priority of your submission, if there is a time limit on the response and it is absolutely critical that you get a quick turnaround, by all means add an **immediate** marking in the Subject heading of your email message. Where this is the case I would also advise that you call Private Office to draw our attention to the submission and to ensure that we are able to get this in front of the Minister. As you know we can frequently be away from the office and deal with such large volumes that it helps if we know what to look out for and when.
- Please ensure that your submissions are clearly marked with their priority: **routine** (no sooner than 3 working days), **urgent** (within 3 working days) or **immediate** (within 24 hours). These should also be given a specific deadline for a response. As previously mentioned it is helpful to contact Private Office by phone to alert them to **immediate** submissions.
- All recommendations; decisions required and conclusions should be typed in **BOLD**.
- **Please note** : it would be helpful if **revised** notes or papers, etc be put up in a form that indicates the sections which have been revised.

Proof reading : More than any other action, checking the spelling and proof reading a final draft carefully can cut down response times. This includes the readability of the text and the formatting of any letters, particularly in relation to MACCS cases and PQs.

Correspondence

Ministers attach great importance to Ministerial Replies. The Minister and Private Office appreciate the high quality of drafts that are received and the excellent information that the Environment Directorate have for processing MACCS cases.

Often it is the case that Private Office amend MACCS cases at our end, whether it be formatting, spelling or grammar before the Minister sees it. It is useful if you compare the scanned signed version with that which you originally sent up to Private Office - this will let you see what changes have been made and give you a better inkling of the Minister's style.

Please note preferences differ between Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and the First Minister.

The list below is in alphabetical order for ease of reference:

MSPs - please use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSP's 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'.

Address	<p>Constituents - 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>Email - 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.</p>
Contact Details	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about.....".• Please ensure the response answers the point raised by the correspondent.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.• 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.
Constituents	<p>When drafting an OR please check whether the correspondent is one of Ms Cunningham's constituents (Perthshire) as the Minister requests Ministerial replies to all her constituents (see also Ministerial Replies below).</p>
Co-ordinated Responses	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that all the facts and figures are consistent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.• 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 Ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before she sees it.
Date	
Delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the response is >4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.• If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.
Diary Invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PS• All invitations addressed to Ms Cunningham should be replied to by her Private Office, even if another Cabinet Secretary/Minister is to take on the engagement on her behalf (see also reallocation). 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 [if the event is in the Parliamentary session, not recess].
- Do not use diary commitments or Parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation unless it is true, especially if the event is some way off. Simply respond that the Minister is unable to accept the invitation, offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event.
- MACCS cases that don't have Press Office advice box completed will be rejected.
- Diary responses can be brief, unless there are specific arrangements or policy details that need to be included. Generic examples are suggested below:

DIARY ACCEPT

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs to attend your Annual Conference.

Ms Cunningham would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary to agree a mutually convenient date / make the necessary arrangements.

Private Secretary

DIARY DECLINE

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for Community Safety & Legal Affairs, to attend your Annual Conference on 1 April 2008.

Unfortunately Ms Cunningham will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

Private Secretary

- 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 PO 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 Cunningham wants to accept invites that add value and fits 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 Cunningham 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.

Font

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

Language

- Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. young people.
- Ensure that the reply is clear, concise and written in a language that is easily understood.
- 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.....".
- Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.
- If a case is reallocated to Roseanna Cunningham for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility" should be used.
- Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately".
- 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".
- 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.
- Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter outwith MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.
- Please leave 7 lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to write the greeting and her signature.
- 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.
- 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.....".
- Please do not use paragraph numbering.
- **Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. <<text>>.**
- Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM

Ministerial Replies

Ms Cunningham wishes to sign all letters to her constituents.

Official Replies

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

Reallocation

MR' s can be reallocated so that Ms Cunningham 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".

Signature Letters for the Minister's signature

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM

Letters for PS/Ms Cunningham's signature **Private Secretary**

Spelling **IMPORTANT - Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.**

Timing Although a PO deadline is provided, it only gives the Minister 3 days to sign-off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister 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/Convener.
- If responding to a Councillor, please address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convenor/Chairperson, this should be included.
- Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.
- Do not use Esquire after a name.

Main Contact Point for MACCS:

Diary and Correspondence Secretary for Roseanna Cunningham

And finally

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have a query or require advice about any of the above. One of us is almost always available to assist in answering your queries and by asking first, time can often be saved later on in rectifying mistakes. In addition, we are always happy to meet people from the Justice portfolio who want to know what goes on in Private Office.

Briefing

Events

- The Minister doesn't have a strong preference for a particular style or layout for briefing. She is content as long as all the relevant information is available.
- When you are doing a briefing pack for a Ministerial event think yourself through the visit - what is the background to the visit, what are the background facts and stats on the industry/organisation, who will she meet with, what are their positions, what is their background, will the Minister be expected to speak? It might seem basic but Ms Cunningham can attend three or four major events in one day and needs to be as fresh

for the first as she is for the last. This also means that she doesn't have a lot of time to get to grips with briefing so the more factual and punchy the better.

Meetings

- It is useful to have all the background about who the meeting is with and what the purpose is - best to assume nothing and to give a bit of background on the organisations and individuals attending.
- Where there is an agenda for the meeting grateful if a chairperson's brief could be provided, even when the Minister is not chairing the meeting. A brief that follows the agenda items and has lines to take and points she ought to make in bullet form under each agenda item is helpful. This should be supplemented with the more detailed background briefing on each issue in Annexes behind.
- Where possible we will try to have a pre-brief before events with the Minister. Diary constraints will, however, make this quite difficult.

Diary

When you call the office to enquire about the Minister's availability, we can suggest dates but we will not reserve time in the diary. Office policy is not to put anything into the diary without the Minister's formal agreement. The following table illustrates his availability in a "typical" week:

Monday	Constituency Business	Generally the minister is unavailable on a Monday as she will be based in her constituency (Perthshire South and Kinross-Shire). Ms Cunningham may hold meetings and take on events within reasonable travel distance of her constituency. Private Office should always be consulted in the first instance.
Tuesday	Meetings	Meeting with senior officials and possible Ministerial meetings/visits.
SAH		
Wednesday AM	Ministerial Meetings	Possible Ministerial meetings/visits taking place.
Holyrood		
Wednesday PM	Parliamentary Business	Due to the unpredictable nature of Parliamentary business, it is difficult to arrange meetings and engagements between 14:30 and 17:00. Any meetings arranged can be cancelled at short notice.
Holyrood		
Thursday	Parliamentary Business	See above for meetings arranged between 09:30 - 12:00 and 14:00 - 17:00. We do not accept engagements over Question time if the Ministers themed week.
Holyrood		
Friday	Constituency Business	Generally, the Minister is not available for Ministerial business. She is based in her constituency, Perthshire South and Kinross-Shire on Fridays and will not normally be available for Ministerial Business or to clear papers (unless urgently required to do so).

If the engagement is not being dealt with through the MACCS, then the Minister's agreement should be sought through a short submission with as much information as possible (e.g. date, time, location, purpose, key messages etc.)

When the Minister agrees to undertake an engagement or meeting the Minister's Diary Secretary will be in touch to confirm the agreed time, and will send the meeting request to the Action Officer, Head of Branch, Comms Justice and DG Justice. It is extremely important that any change to the time or location are cleared with the Diary Secretary - Ms Cunningham's diary is very busy and changes of even half an hour either way can cause real problems!

Please ensure that we have the full address (including postcode) of the place that the Minister is visiting as soon as possible. This is required so that the diary Secretary can issue courtesy e-mails to the local MSPs and MPs informing them that the Minister will be in their constituency.

Speeches

- Ms Cunningham always adds her own comments to speeches. Depending on the type of event, Ms Cunningham may wish to have short paragraphs or bullet points that she can embellish with her own style than a fully worked up speech to be delivered word for word. The Minister will often set the scene for a speech by adding her own anecdotes so the bare facts laid out clearly and in short sentences are generally all that is needed.
- The exception to this rule are big set piece speeches. On such occasions please contact private office to set up an initial chat about the content of the speech before drafting. The Minister will want to be clear about the direction and content of the bigger set piece speeches. Full speeches should be sent in draft no later than **1 week** before an event as the Minister will wish to read - ask questions, and more often than not, will make revisions.
- Avoid technical jargon unless it is suitable for that particular audience
- Formatting:
- **Arial 20 Bold - 1.5 line spacing numbered paragraphs and pages - headings underlined - word count at end - do not let paragraphs run over two pages.**
- New subject heading - new page.
- Because the Minister tends not to read speeches word for word and frequently ad-libs it can be difficult to know how much material to provide, in particular for speeches in the Parliament that have strict timings. As a rough guide, she speaks at a rate of 150 words per minute. When providing speeches for debates time for interventions should be taken in to account.
- Ms Cunningham likes to have time to consider her speeches and to put her own stamp on them so don't feel put out if she makes changes.
- Prepare a Q & A for all speaking events as the Minister is often asked without warning at an event to give a Q & A so it is useful to have one prepared.
- Please consider the audience e.g. young people or academics.
- **Please do a spell check.**

E-mails

All e-mails should be sent to Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs mailbox, not to personal mailboxes.

When responding to a query from the Private Office, it is very helpful if you refer to the original query as this helps us to associate papers. It is also extremely useful if the title of the e-mail is self-explanatory, and the same as the title of any attached submissions. This allows us to find the correspondence much more quickly - we often have one or two thousand e-mails in the mailbox plus archived material to search!

If you are sending an urgent or immediate e-mail that needs to be seen straight away, please telephone the office in advance of sending the minute so that we know to check the mailbox and IMMEDIATE in the Subject heading.

E-mails to accompany submissions

When sending up a submission to Ms Cunningham please provide a clear title in the Subject line of the e-mail as appropriate (i.e. with a description of what is contained within the email) and timescale (i.e. Immediate, Urgent, etc).

In the body of the e-mail please indicate the timing of the minute; which Minister is required to take a decision or is the lead Minister and the subject matter.

Issuing documents by e-mail

When issuing documents by e-mail, in particular externally, please ensure that you have gone into the document to accept all track changes and saved it as new. Whilst an attachment may look 'clean' on your screen before issue, all amendments and their history will be shown on the recipient's computer if they have track changes automatically switched on. This can be potentially embarrassing if the document has contained anything confidential or been significantly amended.

Parliamentary Questions

- Ms Cunningham is happy with the standard of PQ answers coming up from the portfolio. The only general things she asks for are that people answering PQs are as helpful as possible, ensure that their answer reflects the Government position and bear in mind the politics of the question, i.e. who is asking it, is this one of a series of questions on a similar issue, has there been correspondence on the same subject from this MSP or their constituents etc.
- **For Oral PQs, please ensure that you are available on the Thursday morning (and early afternoon for Themed Questions) to make drafting changes or to answer any questions the Minister may have before she stands up in the chamber.**
- Correct contact numbers should be provided for Themed Questions.