

Subject:

FW: Flags - media follow up queries

From: [redacted] **On Behalf Of** News Desk

Sent: 24 January 2018 18:28

To: Hynd JS (James); News Desk; Director Communications, Ministerial Support & Facilities; Permanent Secretary

Cc: [redacted] Corporate Communications; [redacted] DG Constitution and External Affairs; [redacted] Booth J (John); [redacted] Nicolson S (Stuart) Special Adviser; First Minister; Rogers DA (David) (Strategy and Constitution Director); Booth J (John); [redacted] Lloyd E (Elizabeth); Protocol and Honours Mailbox; [redacted]

Subject: RE: Flags - media follow up queries

Thanks all. Will make that change and issue.

- Your statement says: "... the Scottish Government, by Royal Assent, has flown the Royal Banner (the Lion Rampant) and the Saltire on Royal Occasions since 2010." Does this specifically refer to St Andrew's House? **Yes it does refer to St Andrew's House**
- How many other a) Scottish Government and b) non-ministerial government departments c) executive NDPBs sites have flag poles and how does updated guidance apply to them? **Only St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay have external flag poles within the core Scottish Government estate. The flag-flying guidance is also issued to executive agencies and associated departments. However, it is not mandatory and it is a matter for organisations to decide their own policies. We do not record which organisations have flagpoles or whether they fly flags.**
- Your statement says NPBDs able to adopt their own policy. Historic Environment Scotland and Courts Service confirm they follow the SG protocols. Is SG aware of who else does? If so which? **It is a matter for each organisation and we don't hold this information.**
- Could you please confirm the name of every building operated by the SG, its related agencies and associated departments which display flags? **Only St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay have external flag poles within the core Scottish Government estate. We do not record which organisations have flagpoles or whether they fly flags.**
- How many days did each of these buildings fly the Union flag last year and how many times did they fly the Lion Rampant? **The Scottish Government flew the Union Flag on Remembrance Day - the Union Flag also forms part of the flags flown on Merchant Navy Day and Armed Forces Day. This has not changed since 2010.**
- Also, following Nicola Sturgeon's numerous Twitter posts, the Scottish Tories have called for the SG to simply change the guidance and reinstate the Union flag in its guidance. Will the SG be willing to do this? **SG policy on Royal birthday and anniversaries is for the Royal Banner, by Royal Assent, to be flown alongside the Saltire. The Royal Banner is the senior flag and it is an appropriate way to mark Royal Occasions in Scotland to fly it alongside the Saltire. We have no plans to change this.**
- Can you confirm what the guidance means for the other SG buildings like Atlantic Quay and Victoria Quay, and those buildings operated by agencies? **Only St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay have external flag poles within the core Scottish Government estate. Both St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay follow the policy adopted in 2010 and this has not changed. The flag-flying guidance is also issued to executive agencies and associated departments. However, it is not mandatory and it is a matter for organisations to decide their own policies. We do not record which organisations have flagpoles or whether they fly flags.**

- Do you accept that all agencies and quangos which followed the guidance were told to display the Union flag on these dates last year but are now no longer asked to? **No. We do not tell them what flag to fly - it is a matter for each individual organisation whether it flies any flags and what flag it flies.**
- Given that the FM and SG ministers were not responsible for changing the guidance, who was? Did no minister sign off on it? **SG Officials brought operational guidance into line with longstanding policy. This was not signed off by Ministers.**
- Also, Can you confirm which government buildings this covers? You say NDPBs can make their own policy. Does that mean that the guidance just covers SAH, Vic Quay and one or two others? Or does it cover many more buildings? **Only St Andrew's House and Victoria Quay have external flag poles within the core Scottish Government estate. The flag-flying guidance is also issued to executive agencies and associated departments. However, it is not mandatory and it is a matter for organisations to decide their own policies. We do not record which organisations have flagpoles or whether they fly flags.**

[redacted] | Newsdesk Manager | Scottish Government [redacted]