

## **Nicola Sturgeon - First Minister**

### **First Minister - speeches**

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

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

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

### **First Minister - engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

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

#### **External meetings and visits**

- maximum of 15 pages unless discussed with First Minister's private office
- cover sheet which clearly outlines the purpose of the meeting and who the key people she is meeting are. If the First Minister is attending an event, her role should also be detailed
- agenda/running order
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since

- the First Minister does not want Q and A. Please provide any necessary statistics or facts in bullet format which is clear and easy to understand. Information should always be provided in context
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - to be discussed with speechwriters - see speech preferences

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

### **First Minister - correspondence**

#### **Letters**

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

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

#### **Emails**

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

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

### **Advice and briefings**

These should be accurate, clear, concise, relevant and focused.

For event briefings and policy submissions, ask yourself:

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

### **Speeches**

The Deputy First Minister uses three types of speeches:

- bullet point aide-memoire
- structured bullet point paragraphs
- full speaking notes
- check with Private Office which is required for your event.

### **Format**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Debates/committee**

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

### **Tips**

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

### **Format**

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

### **Speaking rate**

Ms Todd speaks at around 140 words per minute.

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

(a copy is included in the briefing template)

#### **Speech Box**

Clear message of speech -

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

Lectern or sitting as part of a panel?

Make-up of the audience?

How many are attending?

What do they want to hear?

Any media interest?

Have special advisers and communications colleagues been consulted?

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

## **Richard Lochhead – Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science**

### **Briefing**

#### **Events**

- 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 related portfolio area, who will he meet with, what are their positions, what is their background, will the Minister be expected to speak? These are all the sorts of questions that the Minister will look for in an events briefing pack. It might seem basic but Mr Lochhead can attend 2 or 3 events/visits in one day and needs to be as fresh for the first as he is for the last. This also means that he doesn't have a lot of time to get to grips with briefing so the more factual and punchy the better – again, headings with bullet points are entirely appropriate.
- **Private office plea re. events** - Please consider carefully what value Mr Lochhead's attendance is going to add to an event. For example - If you don't think that you need to attend the event and communications colleagues don't think there are good opportunities around it, there has to be a pretty compelling reason for the Minister to go other than it would just be nice to do. You are all aware of the pressures on diaries, particularly with the current Parliamentary arithmetic so please bear this in mind.
- Mr Lochhead also likes to send "Thank you" letters following his visits so please draft these as appropriate.

#### **Meetings**

- Here again it is critical to have all of the background there about who the meeting is with and what the purpose is. To reinforce - 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 (this is the case even when Mr Lochhead is not chairing the meeting). What Mr Lochhead is looking for is a brief that follows the agenda items and has lines to take and points he ought to make in bullet form under each agenda item. 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 any event with the Minister, as appropriate.

#### **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.
- Start with the big picture – think about who the audience is and set the speech in context with scene setting facts and figures.
- 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 – **Arial 16 Bold – 1.5 line spacing – numbered paragraphs and pages – headings underlined – word count at end – “Check Against Delivery” in the header – do not let paragraphs run over two pages.**
- Mr Lochhead speaks at around 160 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 send speeches as a separate Word document (not embedded !) rather than within the core briefing paper. It makes it easier to amend that way – if necessary.
- Please, please get speeches up **at least** one week in advance of the date the Minister 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.

### **Correspondence**

- Mr Lochhead is keen to be as positive as possible in our correspondence with people and to ensure that we are answering the question asked and providing as much relevant information as possible.
- Please ensure that your letters come up on the correct templates and that you have checked the addressee details to ensure that spelling and title etc. are correct.
- On the new correspondence templates, please ensure that the date and ref numbers are on the right of the page.
- Mr Lochhead is keen to write to any of our stakeholders in recognition of something they have done well so would like to encourage you to identify opportunities where this might be appropriate.
- Please ensure that Ministerial Correspondence is answered within the time period allowed by the system – Ministers take these timescales extremely seriously and will require explanations if there are repeated failures to meet these deadlines – This also applies to the deadlines for Parliamentary Questions.

## **Aileen Campbell – Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government**

### **Engagement briefing**

Use Ms Campbell's preferred templates for engagements or meetings.

- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Campbell notes their mobile number in the briefing and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Campbell can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Campbell or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- if amendments are required after the briefing has been submitted, please call us to discuss whether a whole new pack is required or whether a page can be substituted
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

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

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- if the organisation has recently responded to an SG consultation or written to us about an issue, a summary of their views
- any difficult or sensitive issues
- Q and A
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

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

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

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

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

## **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

## **Speeches**

### **Key points**

- for big set-piece events, Ms Campbell expects all speeches to be written out verbatim
- draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us along with agenda, audience and theme of event two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Ms Campbell to consider and provide feedback
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon. Remember this is being spoken. Consider the audience and whether you would be happy to deliver it – or listen to it!
- Ms Campbell does not want her speeches to include long lists of SG achievements – if it's absolutely necessary, pick a maximum of three
- Ms Campbell generally prefers speeches to be a maximum of 10 minutes, and is always happy to offer Q&A where possible (with appropriate briefing)

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

Top tip: one page = one minute.

## **Correspondence**

### **Key points**

Please keep correspondence consistent with Ms Campbell's preferences.

The guidance listed below is in alphabetical order:

## Address

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

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

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

## Contact Details

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

## Content

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

## Co-ordinated responses

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

## Date

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

## Delays

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

## Font

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

## Diary Invitations

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

## Language

- consider who will be reading the response, for example children/young people
- ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood
- do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences, for example: 'I am writing to...', 'First of all,...', 'I have to advise you that...', 'Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...'
- keep sentences short and avoid jargon

- if a case is reallocated to Ms Campbell for answer, the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise' should be used
- do not use the phrase 'I am afraid'. An alternative is 'Unfortunately'
- do not use the phrase, 'Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene'. An alternative wording is 'it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene'
- where appropriate add, 'I hope this is helpful' at the end of a response

## Layout

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

## Official Replies

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

## Reallocation

Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Ms Campbell is answering on behalf of the cabinet

secretary/minister who received the original letter. Thank the correspondent for their letter to the original cabinet secretary/minister and add, 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise'

**Signature**

Letters for the Minister's signature:

**AILEEN CAMPBELL**

Letters for PS/Ms Campbell's signature:

**[REDACTED]**

Private Secretary

**Spelling**

Use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it

**Timing**

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

**Titles**

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

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

### **Engagement briefing**

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

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

Remember these key points when preparing briefing

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

be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after a speech. If so, please make sure that you inform private office

- agendas should be provided for all meetings and it is helpful if they are numbered and in bold
- official support should be provided, unless previously agreed with private office
- officials should draft a short note (action points/flagging up any sensitive issues) post meetings (verbatim notes are not necessary, unless officials' preference is for a fuller record of external meetings or they require to share them with stakeholders), summarising any action(s) to be taken forward and submit to private office within two weeks of the event taking place for the Mr Stewart's consideration/clearance
- avoid unnecessary repetition between the summary page and the background briefing. You can assume that if Mr Stewart is reading the background briefing, he has read the summary page. In particular, avoid phrasing the same point differently in the two as this can cause confusion
- include a list of meeting attendees and brief biographies (no need for these if Mr Stewart has met them before) of any key people (including a note of previous meetings if Mr Stewart hasn't met them before)
- include an up-to-date/accurate address that has been checked with organisers if necessary
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- you should always take into account any mobility issues. Always aim to arrive at events 15-30 minutes ahead of Mr Stewart so you are able to ensure everything is in place for his arrival and you are on hand to meet him and on time
- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Stewart to do or what they would like to discuss (if a formal meeting), and the format of their event as early as possible. Agendas are essential to help focus discussions – if stakeholders don't provide one you should provide one for our interests to help steer Mr Stewart. If anything is unclear or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office as soon as possible. You should find out, in particular, if Mr Stewart will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after a speech. If so, please make sure that you inform private office
- agendas should be provided for all meetings and it is helpful if they are numbered and in bold
- official support should be provided, unless previously agreed with private office
- officials should draft a short note (action points/flagging up any sensitive issues) post meetings (verbatim notes are not necessary, unless officials' preference is for a fuller record of external meetings or they require to share them with stakeholders), summarising any action(s) to be taken forward and submit to private office within two weeks of the event taking place for the Mr Stewart's consideration/clearance

**Category**

**Level 1**

**Type of event**

- parliamentary debates
- committee appearances

**Briefing pack and contents**

Full briefing, for example:

**For debates:**

- officials supporting Mr Stewart in the chamber

for closing speeches  
should use the box  
template

- cover sheet
- motion
- speaking note (attached as a separate word document)
- content page – all pages to be numbered
- key messages to get across during the debate (essential)
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments (essential)
- likely areas of opposition attack (essential)
- stakeholder views
- key messages/ sensitivities/data
- briefing notes on key issues (essential)
- summary of previous evidence sessions
- detailed policy notes (separate page for each one), including achievements and stats
- Q and A – should always include any known questions in sequence, bullet point answers/comments, keep short and to the point
- briefing should be signed off by deputy director
- official support required - team leader and senior policy official
- **For committee appearances:**
- committee agenda (available on parliament website)
- speaking note/opening remarks (approx three

minutes max), attached as a separate word document

- contents page – all pages to be numbered
- strategic overview and high level summary of SG proposals/policies – what are we seeking to achieve
- achievements/actions already taken
- stats
- key points
- detailed policy notes (separate page for each one including achievements and status)
- stakeholder views
- key messages/sensitivities/data
- Q and A – should always include any anticipated questions in sequence, bullet point answers/comments, keep short and to the point
- official support required - team leader and senior policy official
- when drafting letters to the LGCC Convener, please check the spelling is 'Convener' – not 'Convenor' and letters requiring to be sent by email should be sent to the committee's generic box

## Level 2

- ministerial working groups
- bi-lateral meetings with ministers of other governments

Ideally a maximum of 20 pages to include:

- cover sheet
- agenda

- meetings with key stakeholders to discuss significant issues
- major conference/event with key role/speech/Q and A
- events likely to have significant media interest
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired
- background on key issues to be discussed
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- lines to take
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

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

### Level 3

- meetings with external stakeholders (for example the result of MACCS cases)
  - receptions
  - events, including dinners
- Similar to above but ideally no more than 8-10 pages
- Official support expected for stakeholder meetings

### Level 4

- routine visits/engagements
- photo-ops

Logistic briefing only – ideally about six pages

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

### Speeches

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

- think carefully about the audience that the speech is intended for
- make sure you know what the format of the event will be. Will the audience be standing or sitting? Will Mr Stewart deliver the speech from a lectern (his preference for large events), sitting at a table, or standing in the centre of a room without a lectern?
- Mr Stewart prefers full speaking notes (with page numbers top and bottom right flush) and speaks at 125-130 words per minute. Always include a word count and approximate time at the end of a speech
- think about what the speech is trying to achieve. Summarise that at the start, then work through the body of the speech with that clearly in mind, then conclude by summarising the key message(s) again

- ensure speeches have an introduction and conclusion, flow naturally and any subject changes are linked appropriately
- speeches should be sent to private office at least one week before the event/meeting – speeches for debates should always be quality checked by senior management
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack in Arial font, size 16, 1.5 spacing
- paragraphs should be left flush, no bullets or numbered paras, sub-paras can have bullets
- ensure paragraphs don't run over the page, are kept short using layman's terms, avoid jargon and when starting a new subject heading start on a new page
- always check facts and figures and do a spell check
- always read the speech out loud - that is the best way to pick up on things such as repetitive use of words, or failing to allow for a natural breathing space
- if time/word count is a concern (for example for a debate), then consider highlighting paragraphs in yellow that Mr Stewart could drop without affecting the flow of the speech or accidentally omitting key information

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

### **Correspondence**

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

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

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

### **Diary invitations**

Make sure you consider the following before submitting a response:

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

diary availability. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary, [REDACTED], via e-mail at MinisterLGHP@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements.

### Language

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

### Layout

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

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

### **Briefings**

- Size 12, Arial
- Please avoid embedding attachments in the briefing, instead please attach these to the email so PO is aware these are also to be included.
- Please ensure that speeches are included at annex A
- If organising a full day of events, please bear in mind that it is easier to have separate briefing packs (even if they are short) for each engagement.
- Annotated agendas should be avoided where possible. Preference is for standard briefing and a clear agenda

### **Speeches**

- All speeches should be in Arial font
- Please do not bullet point the speech
- It is particularly helpful if page breaks only occur at the end of a full sentence
- Each page should be numbered
- Ensure pronunciation is included beside any unusual words/names or foreign languages
- Lectern:
  - Font size 16
  - 1.5 spacing
- No lectern/Sitting
  - Font size 14
  - Single spacing
- Please be aware that in speeches, certain words are used very frequently, which can get quite repetitive, i.e. the phrase 'I am delighted to...'. Please bear this in mind and vary the language in speeches when possible.

### **Emails/Correspondence**

- Grateful if any emails/attachments/submissions sent to the mailbox could be font size 12, Arial, and in black
- When possible, please ensure spread sheets are able to fit on either A4 or A3, whilst ensuring that the text is legible when printed

## **Ben Macpherson – Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development**

### **Engagement briefing**

- ensure that you use his preferred for either engagements or meetings
- ensure where appropriate that there is parking for the government car
- ensure any official attending an event notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has the phone switched on and on loud. This means that we or Mr Macpherson can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr Macpherson or private office think the briefing is too long, it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers)
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office. Officials attend to brief Mr Macpherson, if the need arises, and to return and feed back to the directorate
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting

### **Briefing should include:**

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

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

- draft speeches for significant events should to be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Mr Macpherson to consider and provide feedback. Private office may also arrange a discussion between officials and Mr Macpherson to go over the content of a speech
- as a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech. A word count should be included at the end
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- page breaks should occur only at the end of a full sentence, with no split paragraph between pages (therefore providing a natural pause between changing pages)

- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken

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

### **Top tips on writing a speech for Mr Macpherson**

- Mr Macpherson speaks at approximately 130 words per minute
- Mr Macpherson likes his speeches to be written in active and not passive format

### **Know the audience**

- what do they expect to hear from Mr Macpherson?
- how long will they expect him to speak for?
- is the speech appropriate to the audience, for example school children?
- who in the audience is worthy of a mention?
- consult widely to improve relevance
- think laterally about issues affecting the audience - get the most up-to-date position possible on these (consulting with the communications team where necessary)
- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience and where they fit into the bigger picture
- try to link paragraphs into the next paragraph or section using connecting sentences

### **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 - Mr Macpherson will add anecdotes, jokes as appropriate, but any suggestions are very welcome
- it is usually best to forward the speech to Mr Macpherson as early as possible. Mr Macpherson will then amend it himself to final form, if appropriate, checking that officials are content with the content of the final speech

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

### Engagement briefing

#### Key points

- ensure that you use Ms Cunningham's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- If you are providing urgent briefing which may require to be **emailed to the Cabinet Secretary**, please bear in mind that she works on an iPad and there are problems with Word formatting converting over – therefore please avoid the use of formatting (and in particular text boxes) and keep the text as plain and simple as possible
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Cunningham notes their mobile number in the briefing and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Cunningham can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- if the Cabinet Secretary is being asked to do Q and A as part of an event, **separate Q and A briefing should be provided** and clearly labelled as such. This can be added as an annex in the briefing pack
- Ms Cunningham prefers her briefing to be structured in a logical manner – she likes to have information about the group she is meeting and the purpose of the event before the agenda, biographies etc
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Cunningham or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- please think carefully about the purpose of the briefing and how much time the Cabinet Secretary will be engaged for. For short engagements (half an hour or less), briefing should be no more than six sides of A4 (not including speech). Please also differentiate your briefing to **ensure it is appropriate** to the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

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

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed

- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- speaking note - if required

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

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

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

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

#### **Media bids/interviews**

- If the Cabinet Secretary has been asked to record a short clip (either radio or TV) for the media, any briefing supplied should be no more than two sides of A4. The briefing should cover:
  - the top lines (at the top of the first page, set out in **bold text**), plus short, relevant background paragraphs
  - highlight any key events which are relevant to the topic having taken place within the last few years (for example – if recording a clip about winter storm impacts, relevant flooding events should be mentioned)
  - attach any recent news releases on the topic as Ms Cunningham often finds it useful to refer to these before recording.

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

#### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

## Speeches

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

### Key points

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

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

## Correspondence

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

Preparing a response:

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

## **Mairi Gougeon - Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment**

### **Engagement Briefings**

- Please ensure you use the correct briefing template for meetings and engagements
- If you are providing urgent briefing which requires PO to email to the Minister, please bear in mind that Word formatting on her tablet can sometimes pose an issue– therefore please avoid the use of formatting (and in particular text boxes) and keep the text as plain and simple as possible
- an address and postcode (checked with the organisers) should be provided to the diary secretary as far in advance as possible. Briefing should include the postcode/map/directions venue contacts. Please check the details carefully as incomplete/confusing directions lead to delays and stress
- provide a map (where required), address and postcode, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Ms Gougeon notes their mobile number in the briefing and has their phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Gougeon can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- briefings should be short, succinct and have an easy to follow structure. For regular meetings, they should be 8 pages maximum. Briefings for larger meetings that the Minister is chairing should include a steering brief but should still be succinct
- if the Minister is being asked to do a Q and A as part of an event, separate Q and A briefing should be provided and clearly labelled as such. This can be added as an annex in the briefing pack (Please ensure all new annexes are on an odd numbered page)
- Ms Gougeon prefers her briefing to be structured in a logical manner – she likes to have information about the group she is meeting and the purpose of the event before the agenda, biographies etc.
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Gougeon or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers on the bottom right).
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require editing by the private office team, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- please think carefully about the purpose of the briefing and how much time the Minister will be engaged for. For short engagements (half an hour or less), briefing should be no more than six sides of A4 (not including a speech). Please also differentiate your briefing to ensure it is appropriate to the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

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

- cover sheet
- agenda

- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and the progress that's been made since
- question and answer
- bios on meeting attendees
- speaking note - if required

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

- similar to above but ideally no more than eight pages

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

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

### **Media bids/interviews**

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

- the top lines (at the top of the first page, set out in bold text), plus short, relevant background paragraphs
- highlight any key events which are relevant to the topic having taken place within the last few years (for example – if recording a clip about national parks, relevant park events/ reports should be mentioned)
- attach any recent news releases on the topic as Ms Gougeon will find it useful to refer to these before recording.

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

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

- summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and the special adviser before being sent to private office.

## Speeches

Ms Gougeon always:

- needs to know who is in the audience - get this from the organiser
- needs to see any agenda. Conferences often have a theme and there may also be papers such as a brochure. It's important to get hold of these as it will help write a speech relevant to the occasion
- needs the facts, and then views. Bullet points are usually enough. Keep it simple. Ms Gougeon usually wishes to record where there is UK Government responsibility and set out the facts on that
- likes to get speeches one week before the event to check over and allow time to commission more information, check facts or briefing
- likes headings for each section of the speech
- does not like long complex sentences full of abstract nouns
- does like helpful factual material - and detail of relevant facts
- **prefers bullet points** - as a guide you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech
- speaks at about 150 words a minute

When writing a speech please remember:

- they should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- have paragraphs no longer than two or three lines
- have page breaks at the end of a sentence. Paragraphs should not run over pages
- **pages must be numbered** (bottom right)
- to include examples of relevant events/ visits Ms Gougeon's has undertaken in her ministerial capacity
- to involve communications and special advisers in drafting
- to always check the speech for accuracy – facts and figures should be checked and double checked
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack
- to avoid using acronyms and jargon - this is being spoken
- Ms Gougeon likes to speak at a lectern - please request this if possible

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

Read the guidance on writing ministerial speeches.

Please consider these points when drafting a speech:

- make the speech relevant to the event
- who are the audience and what do they want to hear about

- the speech should use positive language
- please do not recycle or copy and paste parts of previous speeches on the same subject
- try to avoid getting bogged down in policy unless necessary
- include the big picture context - start and end with the big picture
- include some relevant context, especially in the introduction
- include any constitutional points that are appropriate
- cover hot issues and topical subjects
- potential announcements should be discussed with communications colleagues.
- add some colour to the speech to personalise it and feel free to include testimonials, startling facts, and quotes
- it is important to read the speech aloud to identify any potential challenges or problems in delivering it.

## **Correspondence**

Ministerial correspondence is subject to corporate targets and should be answered within 20 working days. Draft replies for ministerial consideration should be with private office within 10 working days.

Guidance for drafting correspondence and handling invitations is below and private office are more than happy to answer any queries you may have. The Minister attaches great importance to correspondence and would like all policy colleagues to draft quick and sympathetic response to all letters from members of the public.

Ms Gougeon will personally respond to all letters from MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, Councillors, Chairpersons/Chief Executives of Public Bodies and key stakeholders, friends/acquaintances, and constituents (Angus North and Mearns).

In each case there is a "main" point the correspondent makes. Replies should show that the Minister has "got it". To do that use "playback" - in other words begin the letter by repeating the main concern raised, simply to show that the Minister has understood the primary issue, concern, point, criticism or whatever the purpose of the email or letter is. Then respond by setting out the facts and then our views. Candour is good. We cannot satisfy everyone, nor should we raise expectations unfairly.

Use plain English.

Dates should follow Scottish Government convention (e.g. 18 October 2016 not 18th October). Please remove unnecessary parts of the template (for example unused refs or signature). Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put the Minister's name in the signature space – the letter should be ready to print and not need further editing by private office.

Leave three lines between the date and the start of the letter for the "Dear x" to be handwritten and seven lines between the end of the letter and the Cabinet Secretary's name for the signature.

We check the MACCS system regularly for all draft responses for clearance so there is no need to phone/email to alert us.

**Please ensure that any MACCS cases that are either political or sensitive, i.e. relate to a current hot topic, are cleared by the special adviser in advance of submitting to private office.**

Further guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p><b>MSPs</b> - MACCS will default to the Parliament address, this is fine as we tend to email the letters to the MSPs. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'.</p> <p><b>Constituents</b> - When an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given.</p> <p><b>Email</b> - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, please put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed by Private Office.</p>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's diary secretary, [REDACTED], via email at MinisterRANE@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements. (See diary invitations below)</p>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about..."</li><li>• please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent</li><li>• avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked</li><li>• if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date</li></ul>
<b>Co-ordinated responses</b>	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs or press releases. Please ensure that all facts and figures are consistent.</p>
<b>Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• please refer to the date of the original letter in the response</li><li>• if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, please check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Ms Gougeon's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed</li></ul>
<b>Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• if the response is more than 4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</li><li>• if the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the private office deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay</li></ul>

## Font

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

## Diary Invitations

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

### Accept:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, to attend your annual conference.

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

**[REDACTED]**

**PRIVATE SECRETARY**

### Decline:

Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, to attend your annual conference.

Unfortunately, due to prior commitments/ due to engagements we're unable to rearrange, Ms Gougeon is unable to accept your kind invitation on this occasion. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.

**[REDACTED]**

**PRIVATE SECRETARY**

## Language

- please consider who will be reading the response e.g. children/young people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. See SG writing guide for reference</li> <li>• please do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences e.g.: "I am writing to..."; "First of all,..."; "I have to advise you that..."; "Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about..."</li> <li>• keep sentences short and avoid jargon</li> <li>• if a case is reallocated to Mairi Gougeon for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise" should be used</li> <li>• please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately"</li> <li>• please do not use the phrase, "Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene". An alternative wording is "it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene".</li> <li>• where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response</li> <li>• try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so</li> <li>• please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, please use the ministerial template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.</li> <li>• please leave four lines free at the top between the date and the start of the letter and six lines at bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to add her signature</li> <li>• if, due to the above formatting, the minister's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page</li> <li>• please do not use <b>SUBJECT TITLES</b> at the beginning of a letter, instead incorporate in opening sentence "Thank you for your letter of 1 January about....."</li> <li>• please do not use paragraph numbering</li> <li>• ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. &lt;&lt; text&gt;&gt; , Your ref, signature.</li> <li>• please ensure that the Minister's name is at the bottom left of the letter and in bold and capitals" <b>MAIRI GOUGEON</b>"</li> <li>• the private secretary's signature should also be at the left hand side of the page as detailed below</li> <li>• text should be justified</li> </ul>
<b>Layout</b>	
<b>Official replies</b>	Please include "I have been asked by Ms Gougeon to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf" or a similar form of words.
<b>Reallocation</b>	Ministerial replies can be reallocated so that Ms Gougeon is answering on behalf of another Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise".
<b>Signature</b>	Letters for the Minister's signature (bottom left of the page)

## **MAIRI GOUGEON**

Letters for PS (bottom left of the page)

**[REDACTED]**

**PRIVATE SECRETARY**

### **Spelling**

Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.

### **Timing**

It is always helpful if cases can reach the 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 also be included.
- do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
- do not use Esq after a name

## **Derek Mackay - Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work**

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

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

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

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

#### **Briefing cover sheet**

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

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

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

#### **Deadline**

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

#### **Details have changed**

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

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

- all documents we have received in relation to an event will have been sent to you and, where appropriate, should be incorporated into the briefing. Let Mr Mackay's APS know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents being sent to us. These must be

photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, check with private office where they should be sent to Parliament or St Andrew's House

### **Ministerial electronic diary**

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

### **Pre-brief**

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

### **Press office**

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

### **Postcodes**

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

### **Required information**

- biographies of the key people at the event. If councillors are involved, include their political background and a full list of delegates attending
- rough composition of the audience and approximate numbers attending
- suggested lines to take on topics which might be raised
- relevant facts, figures and/or current issues
- running order

- an address (with postcode), map of location, contact number of venue and contact number of the lead official are essential
- where Mr Mackay is chairing more formal meetings, provide a steering brief
- Mr Mackay's draft speaking note (if required). Make sure the speech is attached as a separate document to the briefing pack. Please refer to the full guidance note on speeches
- if speaking, state whether it's at a lectern, sitting, miked up etc.
- Twitter handles of main representatives and organisations

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

Mr Mackay expects a policy official present at all engagements. Advise in your briefing which official(s) will be accompanying Mr Mackay and provide their mobile number(s).

Officials attend to brief Mr Mackay if the need arises and to take any actions/feedback back to deal with or feed on to the relevant colleagues. Ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when Mr Mackay arrives. Make yourself known immediately to Mr Mackay and/or Private Secretary.

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

### **Speeches**

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

### **Debates and committee appearances**

- discuss with Mr Mackay's APS in the first instance if a full read-out speech is required or if a bullet point speech will suffice
- committee speaking notes should only be a maximum of two pages unless introducing committee to a new topic
- private office will arrange, where possible, a pre-meeting for all committee and debate appearances
- provide a draft copy of the speech and briefing at least one week prior to this pre-meeting

- following the pre-brief, please advise private office when the final briefing and speech will be provided

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

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

### **Length and format**

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

### **Questions**

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

### **Small or informal speeches 2-5 minutes long**

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

### **Speaking rate**

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

### **Speech content**

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

### **Speech format**

- include all speeches as separate documents
- Arial font
- font size 16
- double spaced
- it is particularly helpful if page breaks only occur at the end of a paragraph
- include page numbers at top right of page (i.e. page 1 of 10)
- annotate years in the format YY/YY (i.e. 18/19)
- mark when the speech ends together with the word count (if written in full)

### **Correspondence**

#### **Key points**

Follow Mr Mackay's preferences for Ministerial Replies and other general correspondence. We would advise all officials to check the MACCS system for scans of previous signed letters in order to provide draft letters which meet Mr Mackay's preferences.

When a letter has issued, please check the final signed copy against a locally saved version of the draft you sent to Mr Mackay originally to check for changes made.

Those letters which do not meet the ministerial preferences will be rejected back for redraft.

#### **Address**

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

## **Content**

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

## **Co-ordinated responses**

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

## **Date**

- include only the month and year on the letter. The date will be added by Mr Mackay when he signs the letter

## **Deadlines**

- make every effort to ensure that all MACCS cases are sent to private office within the set timescales and, where possible, even sooner to allow extra time for potential discussion, clarification and/or redrafting
- if the MACCS case is not sent to private office within the deadline, include a short note explaining the delay
- a response going out later than Mr Mackay's final deadline must include an apology for the delay in replying

## **Diary replies**

- unless a response is very long and/or highly detailed, all diary cases should be signed by the Private Secretary. This includes letters from MSPs, MPs, MEPs and councillors
- after 'Kind regards' leave four lines, use the ruler to move the text to point number four and type the PS's full name in capital letters and in bold. Then press enter once, use the ruler to move the text to point number four and type PRIVATE SECRETARY
- all diary cases should have an accept and decline letter unless advised differently
- when drafting an acceptance letter include the sentence asking the correspondent to 'please contact the Minister's Assistant Private Secretary to make the necessary arrangements'
- when drafting a decline do not use specific diary commitments or parliamentary business as a reason to decline an invitation. State that Mr Mackay is unable to accept the invitation due to a fully committed diary. Offer a few words of encouragement and best wishes for a successful event

- always include a fully completed PS minute, including advice from the Communications team if the event involves a press element. Always use the correct template
- if you have received a recommendation from private office regarding a diary case you **must** ensure that this is included on the PS minute. Do not assume that private office will remember the case history
- try to keep all diary replies short and simple, getting to the point as quickly as possible with no unnecessary information

### **Ministerial electronic diary**

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

### **Ministerial replies**

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

### **Non-MACCS cases**

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

### **Official Replies**

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

### **Reallocation**

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

### **Redrafting**

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

### **Spelling**

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

### **Titles**

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

## Jamie Hepburn - Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills

### Engagement briefing

#### Key points

- use Mr Hepburn's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers of both the host and the supporting official. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr Hepburn or private office think the briefing is too long, it will likely be returned for editing. If we think more material is required then we'll let you know
- always include a good summary page as part of the pack with top lines, key issues and anything to avoid. Think of it as being a one-pager that Mr Hepburn could use on its own to get through a meeting. Remember – this isn't verbatim lines to take - focus on key topics/issues and the SG/Minister's position
- try to make the pack (particularly larger packs) as easy to navigate as possible – a 50 page pack with no clear contents page or page numbers will be nigh on impossible to use
- always include a contents page and pages numbers (in the middle at the bottom of the page)
- always contact the event/meeting organiser directly to obtain an agenda, details of what they would like Mr Hepburn to do, or discuss, and the format of their event as early as possible. If anything is unclear, or if you are uncertain that the format is appropriate, please contact private office
- put forward suggestions to make the visit as useful as possible and to make the logistics as easy as possible, for example a tour before an official opening helps to add context to a speech. Mr Hepburn likes to be hands-on and involved in practical areas of visits (for example, is he visiting a café to meet Modern Apprentices? Then he should be involved in making the tea behind the counter – it's a simple task, but looks great in the pictures and the stakeholders always appreciate the involvement)
- find out if Mr Hepburn will be expected to speak at an event and if he will be asked to take questions after his speech. If he will, inform private office immediately
- speaking notes should always be submitted as a separate document (and contains page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office. If there is likely to be a challenge in providing support, then you should contact private office as soon as possible to discuss
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting

## **At an event**

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

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

- ideally a maximum of 20 pages
- cover sheet
- summary page
- agenda – the briefing should provide a clear timeline for the engagement and specify Mr Hepburn's role
- steering brief (if Mr Hepburn is chairing a meeting)
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed – this should focus on agenda items or likely topics to be raised, it shouldn't be the whole directorate's policy priorities
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q and A – light touch and not verbatim answers
- biographies on meeting attendees (if Mr Hepburn has not previously met them)
- speaking note, if required

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

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

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

- this should focus on the logistics – no more than six pages
- why Mr Hepburn is attending and the objectives of the visit

- when, where, what and who, guest list, biographies as above
- any key local or topical issues to be aware of
- good summary page – this is the summary of all the key topics likely to be raised
- briefs, if a conversation is likely to raise issues – this will most likely be read in advance, not on the day by Mr Hepburn

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

### **For committee appearances**

The briefing should cover:

- whether short opening remarks are appropriate – just one or two sides
- a list of committee members
- any particular interest in relevant issues by committee members
- a list of relevant organisations from whom the committee have recently taken evidence from, and any particular issues explored by the committee
- a summary of recent PQs/debates/statements on the issue
- key facts and statistics
- recent media attention on the issues, and the Scottish Government response
- stakeholders views
- financial issues
- supporting officials (please discuss in advance with private office)
- full Q and A

### **Documents to include in the briefing pack:**

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

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

### **Speeches**

### **Key points**

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

### **Speech content**

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

- try to focus the speech on four or five key policy areas – just because Mr Hepburn has 10 minutes to speak, don't make it a policy dump. Each policy topic should always relate back to the nature/purpose of the event
- Mr Hepburn likes positive facts and figures (including funding details) so include those – but make sure they are accurate and up to date
- if facts/figures represent a need for improvement then state that clearly in the speech (for example, "these figures represent progress, but we must go further. We will do that by...")
- be appropriately empathetic to demonstrate we understand the issues facing the audience and how they fit into the bigger picture and thank them for their hard work
- talk about the challenges faced more generally in the particular sector, but always draw them back and link to opportunities
- Mr Hepburn likes the use of repetition of key points/phrases/priorities. For example, if you're talking about the need for a partnership approach to take hold of opportunities (and you should try and talk about this in speeches), then it's worth concluding that particular section/speech with: "together, we can..., together we should..., together we will..."
- would a joke or two be appropriate? If so, add them in
- always bring the speech to a concise conclusion that sums up the key points and reiterates the messages of thanks for the work the organisation/audience do

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

Further advice can also be found in writing a speech.

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

## **Correspondence**

### **Key points**

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

## **Kate Forbes - Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy**

### **Engagement Briefing**

#### **Key Points**

- Please ensure that you use Ms Forbes's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings.
- Briefing should always follow the structure laid out in the template [link] including the sequence of the annexes [link to further information on structure of the briefing]. For briefings with more than 6 annexes (e.g. A to F) please list annexes as page numbers on the contents page (e.g. 1 to 25) instead of using letters of the alphabet – as this aids the Minister in locating the information more easily in a larger briefing pack and reduces the need of tabbing each annex
- Email briefing and speeches one week before the event
- An address and postcode (checked with the organisers) should be provided to the PO Assistant Private Secretary as far in advance as possible. Briefing should include the postcode/map/directions venue contacts. Please check the details carefully as incomplete/confusing directions lead to delays and stress
- Provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- Ensure any official attending an event with 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 them to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail. Officials are expected to be available just before the engagement starts in case Ms Forbes requires a pre-brief.
- Briefings should be short, succinct and have an easy to follow structure. For regular meetings 8 pages maximum. Briefings for larger meetings that the Minister is chairing should include a steering brief but should still be kept as succinct as possible.
- Request a lectern at the venue and note on the briefing and if not, advise the layout i.e. speaking from a table etc.
- Speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). Please refer to the more detailed section for speech preferences [will add link]
- Any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by Private Office, so please use track changes or make them very clear in the covering email.
- Official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with Private Office.
- Please differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient and proportionate for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

#### **Meetings with key stakeholders, Ministers of other Governments, Major conferences and high profile events**

- Ideally a maximum of 20 pages (number pages and don't embed documents in word documents (they can get missed in our printing)
- Cover sheet/Index
- Agenda
- Meeting objective(s), key messages and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- Q&A
- If there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since

- Background on key issues to be discussed
- 
- Bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- Provide a full delegate list
- Speaking Note - if required

#### **Meetings with external stakeholders, Receptions or Events, including dinners etc.**

- Similar to above but ideally no more than 8 pages.

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

- Logistic briefing only - no more than 6 pages
- Why the Minister is attending
- When, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- Any key local or topical issues to be aware of
- Ms Forbes would like a line about most recent engagement the organisation has had with SG – either correspondence, meeting etc. And a line on who the local MSP/MP are.

#### **Parliamentary Engagements**

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

- Cover Sheet
- Key messages to get across
- Summary of relevant Manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- Likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- Speaking Note - see relevant section
- Historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- Summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a Deputy Director and the Special Adviser before being sent to Private Office.

#### **Speeches**

##### **Key points**

##### **Ms Forbes always:**

- Prefers bullet points. As a guide you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a 5 minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech.
- Needs to know who is in the audience - get this from the organiser
- Needs to see any agenda. If a conference there is usually one and a theme. There may also be papers such as a brochure. Very important to get hold of this and associated papers. Will help form a relevant speech to the occasion.

- Needs to know the format. Will the speech be followed by Q&A, is it part of a panel of speakers or is it an opening speech?
- There should always be a briefing on possible questions and answers if the organisers have indicated that there will be Q&A at the event. It should be formatted like the possible supplementary page for oral questions. Lead with questions most recently raised in the press, include high level economic achievements towards the end, followed by anything else deemed appropriate.
- Needs the facts, and then views. Bullet points are usually enough. Keep it simple. Usually wishes to record where there is an UKG responsibility and set out the facts on that.
- Likes to get speeches 1 week before the event to check over and to allow time to commission more information, check facts or briefing.
- Does like helpful factual material - and detail of relevant facts
- Likes to refer to the audience – include examples of what the audience do or have done to make the speech relevant
- The Minister speaks at about 130 words a minute.
- The Minister uses her Surface or an iPad to give the speech
- Speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- Paragraphs should be no longer than 2 or 3 lines
- If the speech is in printed format, page breaks should be at the end of a sentence. Paragraphs should not run over pages
- Ensure pages are numbered
- Include examples of things Ms Forbes has done in her ministerial capacity
- Involve Communications and SpAds in drafting
- Always check the speech for accuracy – facts and figures should be checked and double checked

Speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered! Avoid using acronyms and jargon. Remember this is being spoken.

- As the Minister uses a Surface or iPad to give the speech, she wants to know where the nearest plug socket is. She also likes to speak at a lectern. Please request this if possible.
- The Minister would like to see an early draft of the speech before it is finalised to give thoughts on direction and content. This does not have to be fully complete.

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

**Please consider the below when drafting a speech:**

- Make the speech relevant to the event
- Who are the audience and what do they want to hear about
- The speech should use positive language
- Please do not recycle or copy and paste parts of previous speeches on the same subject
- Try to avoid getting bogged down in policy unless necessary
- Include the big picture context - start and end with the big picture
- Include some relevant context, especially in the introduction
- Include any constitutional points that are appropriate
- Cover hot issues and topical subjects
- Potential announcements - This should be discussed with Communications colleagues.

- Add some colour to the speech - personalise the speech - feel free to include testimonials, startling facts, and quotes.
- It is important to read the speech aloud to identify any potential challenges or problems in delivering it.

## Correspondence

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

## Key Points

- The Minister attaches great importance to correspondence and would like policy colleagues to draft quick and sympathetic responses to all letters from members of the public
- Ms Forbes will personally respond to all letters from MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, Councillors, Chairpersons/Chief Executives of Public Bodies and key stakeholders, friends/acquaintances, and constituents (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch)
- In each case there is a "main" point the correspondent makes. Replies should show that the Minister has "got it". To do that use "playback" - in other words begin the letter by repeating the main concern raised, simply to show that the Minister has understood the primary issue, concern, point, criticism or whatever is the purpose of the email or letter. Then respond by setting out the facts and then our views. Candour is good. We cannot satisfy all comers, nor should we raise expectations unfairly.
- Use plain English
- Dates should follow SG convention (e.g. 18 October 2016 not 18<sup>th</sup> October....)
- Please remove unnecessary parts of the template (e.g. unused refs, signature etc.) Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put the Minister's name in the signature space – i.e. letter should be ready to print and not need further editing by Private Office
- Leave 4 lines between the date and the start of the letter for the "Dear x" to be handwritten and 6 lines between the end of the letter and the Minister's name for the signature which should be in bold in the centre of the page.
- We check the MACCS system regularly for all draft responses for clearance so there is no need to phone/email to alert us.
- Please ensure that any MACCS cases that are either political or sensitive, i.e. relate to a current hot topic, are cleared by the Special Adviser in advance of submitting to PO

## Guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p>MSPs - please use the reply address provided on the letter (link to Minister's template). MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'.</p> <p>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>
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	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.
<b>Contact Details</b>	When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Minister's Assistant Private Secretary, Kirsten Laidlaw, via email at MinisterPFDE@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about..."</li> <li>• Please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent.</li> <li>• Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.</li> <li>• If cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date.</li> </ul>
<b>Co-ordinated responses</b>	Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent.
<b>Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.</li> <li>• If you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, please check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Ms Forbes's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed</li> </ul>
<b>Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the response is &gt;4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</li> <li>• If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Minister within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.</li> </ul>
<b>Font</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12</li> <li>• Please note that the St Andrews House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat.</li> </ul>
<b>Diary Invitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a valid postal/email address is put on the final reply letters - this is important so we can make sure the letter reaches the correct recipient.</li> <li>• Make sure the final reply letters are signed off by the Private Secretary rather than the Minister. Private office sends out all accept/reject letters; the Minister does not sign these off.</li> <li>• Please ensure that the PS Minute includes all specific policy details/key points/comms views - the more information given the more likely the Minister will make a firm decision.</li> <li>• Flag up any diary cases that are going to be sent up late - especially if it is an event that is in the near future. This allows us to let the organisation know well before the event is taking place.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last but not least - please ensure that the grammar/spelling is accurate - in Private Office we don't have time to change all the letters individually so this is a great help!!</li> </ul> <p><i>Sample diary case responses:</i></p> <p>Accept:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, to attend your Annual Conference.</p> <p>Ms Forbes would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business. I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Assistant Private, [REDACTED], via email at MinisterPFDE@gov.scot to arrange a mutually convenient date/make the necessary arrangements.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>PRIVATE SECRETARY</p> <p>Decline:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, to attend your Annual Conference.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Ms Forbes will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept her apologies and best wishes for a successful event.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>PRIVATE SECRETARY</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. children/young people.</li> <li>• Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. See SG writing guide for reference.</li> <li>• Please do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences e.g.: "I am writing to..."; "First of all,..."; "I have to advise you that..."; "Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...".</li> <li>• Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.</li> <li>• If a case is reallocated to Kate Forbes for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise" should be used.</li> <li>• Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately".</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please do not use the phrase, "Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene". An alternative wording is "it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene".</li> <li>• Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.</li> </ul>	
<b>Layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so.</li> <li>• Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.</li> <li>• Please leave four lines free at the top between the date and the start of the letter and six lines at bottom of the text of the response to allow the Minister to add her signature.</li> <li>• If, due to the above formatting, the Minister's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page.</li> <li>• Please do not use SUBJECT TITLES at the beginning of letter, instead incorporate in opening sentence "Thank you for your letter of 1 January about....."</li> <li>• Please do not use paragraph numbering.</li> <li>• Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. &lt;&lt; text&gt;&gt; , Your ref, signature.</li> <li>• Please ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals in the centre of the letter " KATE FORBES" .</li> <li>• The PS's signature should also be in the centre of the page as detailed below.</li> <li>• Text should be centre justified.</li> </ul>	
<b>Official Replies</b>	Please include "I have been asked by Ms Forbes to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf" or a similar form of words.	
<b>Reallocation</b>	Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Ms Forbes is answering on behalf of another Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise".	
<b>Signature</b>	Letters for the Minister's signature (in the centre of the page)	KATE FORBES
	Letters for PS/Ms Forbes's signature (in the centre of the page)	[REDACTED] PRIVATE SECRETARY
<b>Spelling</b>	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
<b>Timing</b>	It is always helpful if cases can reach the Minister as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.	
<b>Titles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.</li><li>• Do not use Esquire after a name.</li></ul>	
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## **Ivan McKee – Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation**

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

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

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

If you have any queries regarding briefing papers please contact Mr McKee's Assistant Private Secretary (APS).

#### **Briefing cover sheet**

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

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

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

#### **Deadline**

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

#### **Details have changed**

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

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

- all documents we have received in relation to an event will have been sent to you and, where appropriate, should be incorporated into the briefing. Let Mr McKee's APS know in advance if there are any non-emailable documents being sent to us. These must be

photocopied in case the original goes missing. Before sending non-emailable documents, check with private office where they should be sent to parliament or St Andrew's House

### **Ministerial electronic diary**

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

### **Pre-brief**

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

### **Press office**

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

### **Postcodes**

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

### **Required information**

- biographies of the key people at the event. If councillors are involved, include their political background and a full list of delegates attending
- rough composition of the audience and approximate numbers attending
- suggested lines to take on topics which might be raised
- relevant facts, figures and/or current issues
- running order
- an address (with postcode), map of location, contact number of venue and contact number of the lead official are essential
- where Mr McKee is chairing more formal meetings, provide a steering brief
- Mr McKee's draft speaking note (if required). Make sure the speech is attached as a separate document to the briefing pack. Please refer to the full guidance note on speeches

- if speaking, state whether it's at a lectern, sitting, miked up etc.
- Twitter handles of main representatives and organisations

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

Mr McKee expects a policy official present at all engagements. Advise in your briefing which official(s) will be accompanying Mr McKee and provide their mobile number(s).

Officials attend to brief Mr McKee if the need arises and to take any actions/feedback back to deal with or feed on to the relevant colleagues. Ensure that your mobile phone is switched on and that you are on hand when Mr McKee arrives. Make yourself known immediately to Mr McKee and/or Private Secretary.

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

### **Speeches**

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

### **Debates and committee appearances**

- discuss with Mr McKee's Assistant Private Secretary (APS) in the first instance if a full read-out speech is required or if a bullet point speech will suffice
- committee speaking notes should only be a maximum of two pages unless introducing committee to a new topic
- private office will arrange, where possible, a pre-meeting for all committee and debate appearances
- provide a draft copy of the speech and briefing at least one week prior to this pre-meeting
- following the pre-brief, please advise private office when the final briefing and speech will be provided

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

- Mr McKee would like a 5-10 minute chat with the lead official for high profile speeches, ahead of drafting
- for the majority of speeches, unless to a large audience, the opening and closing should be strong and both written in full, while the rest of the speech will be delivered by Mr McKee

from bullet points which should be provided, setting out the things that Mr McKee should highlight during the main body of his speech

- where possible, announcements or good news stories should be included in the speech
- include some interesting quotes which Mr McKee may wish to refer to
- try to make the speech lively and interesting and not just covering fact after fact
- use headers for every section Mr McKee is going to cover
- ensure that podium/lectern and PowerPoint equipment (if being used) is provided at all times

### **Length and format**

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

### **Questions**

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

### **Small or informal speeches 2-5 minutes long**

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

### **Speaking rate**

- Mr McKee speaks at 155 words per minute. Remember to reduce each speech by 20% to allow the Minister to add his own personal steer to the speech and/or to allow interventions for parliamentary debates

### **Speech content**

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

- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience whilst still keeping the speech interesting and lively

### Speech format

- include all speeches as separate documents
- Arial font
- font size 16
- double spaced
- it is particularly helpful if page breaks only occur at the end of a paragraph
- include page numbers at top right of page (i.e. page 1 of 10)
- annotate years in the format YY/YY (i.e. 18/19)
- mark when the speech ends together with the word count (if written in full)

### Correspondence

#### Key points

Follow Mr McKee's preferences for Ministerial Replies and other general correspondence. We would advise all officials to check the MACCS system for scans of previous signed letters in order to provide draft letters which meet Mr McKee's preferences.

When a letter has issued, please check the final signed copy against a locally saved version of the draft you sent to Mr McKee originally to check for changes made.

Those letters which do not meet the ministerial preferences will be rejected back for redraft.

#### Address

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

#### Content

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

#### Co-ordinated responses

- many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Make sure that the all facts and figures given in responses are consistent

- where a letter touches on more than one policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials across the Scottish Government departments. Mr McKee is keen to demonstrate a fully informed government that communicates internally. This will ensure that the correspondent receives a reply which is as helpful and robust as possible

#### Date

- include only the month and year on the letter. The date will be added by Mr McKee when he signs the letter

#### Deadlines

- make every effort to ensure that **all** MACCS cases are sent to private office within the set timescales and, where possible, even sooner to allow extra time for potential discussion, clarification and/or redrafting
- if the MACCS case is not sent to private office within the deadline, include a short note explaining the delay
- a response going out later than Mr McKee's final deadline must include an apology for the delay in replying

#### Diary replies

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

#### Ministerial electronic diary

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

### **Ministerial replies**

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

### **Non-MACCS cases**

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

### **Official Replies**

- include 'Thank you for your letter of dd Month to the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation regarding XXXXX. I have been asked to respond' or a similar form of words. Mr McKee would like all official replies to be as helpful and informative/sympathetic as possible

### **Reallocation**

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

### **Redrafting**

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

### **Spelling**

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

### **Titles**

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

## **Mike Russell - Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations**

### **Engagement briefing**

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

### **Speeches**

- for the majority of events Mr Russell will adlib. Bullet points for the key points he should raise are preferable (this should not be a verbatim speech broken into bullets). As a guide, you should provide no more than one to two pages of bullet points for a five minute speech and no more than three to four pages for a 10 minute speech
- for big set-piece events (private office can advise further on these) Mr Russell likes his speeches to be written in verbatim. It is important that all speeches reflect his personality, so he likes to meet with officials in advance to discuss the content. A draft should then be submitted at least a week in advance, preferably two weeks where possible, for Mr Russell to consider and provide feedback
- Mr Russell speaks at about 120 words a minute
- speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack and pages should always be numbered
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken
- always feel free to contact private office if you are unsure of anything. We can advise you on possible content based on the Minister's recent activity

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

### **Correspondence**

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

**Graeme Dey - Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans**

NIL

## **Jeane Freeman – Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport**

### **Engagement briefing**

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

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

Meetings with external stakeholders, ministers of other governments, major conferences, receptions and high profile events:

- please consider if a pre-meeting will be useful and discuss with private office
- please use the briefing template
- ideally a maximum of 10 pages (excluding speech/speaking note)
- cover sheet
- agenda (which should have been agreed in advance by Ms Freeman)
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct), why is Ms Freeman attending event/meeting
- background on key issues to be discussed/or which may be raised, please consider local or topical issues (bullet points)
- if there has been a previous meeting, including engagement with officials, a note of that and progress since should be included
- consider possible questions which will be raised and provide answers
- bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)

Parliamentary engagements (including debates/statements/committee appearances). Such engagements will require comprehensive, but also easily navigable and succinct briefing. This is likely to include:

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

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

#### **After the meeting/event:**

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

#### **Speeches**

##### **Key points**

- all speeches provided to Ms Freeman should be in bullet points (factual information) set out under section/topic headings, apart from opening remarks at committee which should be a full read-out speech
- speeches should always have a cover note which sets out: the topic of the speech, key points to be made, how long Ms Freeman is speaking for and who the audience is. If there is anyone in the audience Ms Freeman should acknowledge please highlight this here and include a bullet point in the speech
- we would not expect Ms Freeman to speak for any longer than 15 minutes and she would do so only in exceptional circumstances. Preference is no more than 10 minutes where possible
- Ms Freeman's preference is to speak after fellow MSPs or UK Government ministers
- Ms Freeman speaks at about 130 words a minute. Please include a word count at the end of speaking bullets and run time based on the words per minute
- please remember Ms Freeman will wish to add her own personal steer to speeches/speaking notes and for debates will need to allow interventions for parliamentary debates. Therefore you should provide 20% less material than the time requires (e.g. 4 mins for 5 min speech, 8 mins for 10 min speech)
- speeches/speaking note should be in Arial 18, double spaced and include page numbers at the top right
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate Word document, if needs be in advance of the wider briefing pack to ensure Ms Freeman has time to consider the speech. Please provide at least a week before Ms Freeman is making the speech
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - please remember this is being spoken

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

Before you start drafting please consider the key messages which you wish Ms Freeman to convey. It is helpful if these are clearly stated. If there are areas which should not be included, (e.g. because it is information not in the public domain) please clearly state this within the briefing pack.

Ms Freeman's preference is always to take questions after she has spoken, not before. Please ensure that where there is to be a Q&A session that this is clearly stated in the briefing pack and relevant supplementary information is provided.

### **Speech content**

- welcome key people at the start
- include what the audience expect to hear from the Minister
- make sure that the speech is in plain English – no jargon or acronyms
- check if any special mentions are required. For example, anyone retiring, receiving an OBE and so on
- think laterally about issues affecting the audience (e.g. are there local issues related to the subject Ms Freeman is speaking about) - get the most up-to-date position possible by consulting with the health communications team where necessary
- add as much context as possible to show that we understand the issues facing the audience and how they fit into the bigger picture while still keeping it interesting

### **Questions**

Ms Freeman is always happy to take questions after a speech. If there are any strong reasons why Ms Freeman should not take questions please advise private office when accepting the invite and in the briefing pack.

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

### **Correspondence**

#### **Key points**

- please follow Ms Freeman's preferences for correspondence. We would advise all officials to check the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS) system for scans of previous signed letters in order to provide draft letters which meet Ms Freeman's preferences. Those letters which do not meet the ministerial preferences will be rejected back for re-draft
- please proof read all response letters before sending them up for consideration

#### **Co-ordinated responses**

- many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Please ensure that all facts and figures given in responses are consistent

- where a letter touches on more than one policy area, it is vital that you seek relevant contributions from other policy officials. This guarantees that we are presenting a fully informed, unified picture of the government and ensures that the answer provided by Ms Freeman is as robust as possible

### **Deadlines**

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

### **Diary replies**

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

### **First Minister**

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

### **Font**

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

### **Non-MACCS cases**

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

### **Official replies**

- please include 'Thank you for your letter of dd month to Jeane Freeman MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, regarding x. Ms Freeman has asked me to respond as I am the policy lead for x' or similar

### **Redrafting**

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

### **Spelling and grammar**

- proof read the response and use the spell and grammar checkers before issuing it

### **Titles**

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

## **Clare Haughey - Minister for Mental Health**

### **Engagement briefing**

- The Minister would appreciate official support at all engagements, please contact Private Office if there is any problems
- The Minister attends some visits without private office support, grateful if official can be outside the venue awaiting her arrival
- Ensure that you use Ms Haughey's preferred template for engagements and meetings
- Provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- Please provide car parking details for the Government car
- Ensure any official attending an event with Ms Haughey notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Ms Haughey can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- Keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Ms Haughey or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- Speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers) - see speech preferences
- Any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- Please avoid using abbreviations in briefings, especially when the subject is outside health
- Differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

- official support should always be in the chamber
- cover sheet
- key messages to get across
- summary of relevant manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- speaking note – the Minister would like the start and end of opening/closing speeches to be verbatim, with key messages and strong rebuttals
- historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- summary of any previous evidence sessions

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

### **Speeches**

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

- Ms Haughey speaks approximately 150 words a minute
- Draft speeches for significant events should be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Ms Haughey to consider and provide feedback
- Speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack and pages should always be numbered
- Avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken
- No jokes
- The speech should be relevant to the audience
- As little as possible with numbers in the speech, more narrative
- Reference relevant policy and meetings/engagements the Minister has done previously
- The format of the speech should follow: long sentence, short sentence, long sentence short sentence...
- Avoid laying out speech content in the introduction of the speech
- Allow for breathing in the speech
- Please include strong rebuttals in debate/statement speeches

Speeches should always be cleared by your Director or Deputy Director

## Correspondence

Please keep correspondence consistent with Ms Haughey's preferences.

Guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

Address	<p>MSPs - use the reply address provided on the letter. MACCS will default to the parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'. All letters to MP's should also be directed to constituency office</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, 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 Ms Haughey's diary secretary. If the date of the event is flexible, give Ms Haughey's email address as a contact detail, as this reduces the amount of calls to private office</p>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If it's a late reply, offer an apology</li><li>• open the letter with some background, for example: 'Thank you for your letter of x about....'</li><li>• ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent</li><li>• avoid 'general interest' details, which do not answer the question asked</li><li>• if cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date</li><li>• no longer than two pages routinely</li></ul>
Co-ordinated responses	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, press releases and so on. Ensure that all the facts and figures are consistent</p>
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refer to the date of the original letter in the response</li><li>• if you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as,</li></ul>

depending on ministerial availability, it may take a couple of days before Ms Haughey sees it

#### Delays

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

#### Font

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

#### Diary invitations

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

#### Example decline letter

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

#### Language

- consider who will be reading the response, for example young people
- ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood
- do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences, for example: 'I am writing to...', 'First of all,...', 'I have to advise you that...', 'Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...'
- keep sentences short and avoid jargon
- if a case is reallocated to Ms Haughey for answer the phrase 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility' should be used

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>do not use the phrase 'I am afraid'. An alternative is 'Unfortunately...'</li> <li>do not use the phrase, 'Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene'. An alternative wording is 'it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene'</li> <li>where appropriate add, 'I hope this is helpful' at the end of a response</li> </ul>
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so</li> <li>do not alter the default page setup. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word</li> <li>leave five lines free at the top and bottom of the text of the response to allow Ms Haughey to write the greeting and her signature</li> <li>if, due to the above formatting, Ms Haughey's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page</li> <li>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...'</li> <li>do not use paragraph numbering</li> <li>ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. &lt;&lt; text&gt;&gt;</li> <li>ensure that the Minister's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals: CLARE HAUGHEY</li> </ul>
Ministerial Replies	Ms Haughey wishes to sign all letters to her constituents
Official Replies	Include 'I have been asked by Ms Haughey to thank you for your letter of day/month and to reply on her behalf' or a similar form of words
Reallocation	Ministerial correspondence can be reallocated so that Ms Haughey is answering on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, 'I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for this matter'
Signature	Letters for Ms Haughey's signature: Clare Haughey Letters for PS/Ms Haughey's signature: [REDACTED] Private Secretary
Spelling	Always use spell checker and proof read the response before forwarding to private office
Timing	Although a private office deadline is provided, it only gives Ms Haughey three days to sign off a case. It is always helpful if cases can reach Ms Haughey as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener</li> </ul>

- if responding to a councillor, address him/her as such. If they have another title such as Convenor/Chairperson, this should also be included
- do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does
- if Ms Haughey is writing Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr etc please ensure these titles are also used in address line. Either formally or informally throughout - not a mixture
- do not use Esquire after a name

## **Joe FitzPatrick – Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing**

### **Engagement briefing**

#### **Key points**

- contact the diary secretary who will arrange a pre-meeting one week before the engagement or meeting and advise timings
- send all briefing to the private office before the pre-meeting
- officials should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of an engagement in case Mr FitzPatrick needs to discuss any issues
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- ensure any official attending an event with Mr FitzPatrick notes their mobile number in the briefing, and has this phone switched on. This means that we or Mr FitzPatrick can contact you to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail
- keep briefing short, relevant and avoid duplication. If Mr FitzPatrick or private office think the briefing is too long it will likely be returned for editing
- speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). See speeches
- any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by the private office, so please track change these or make them very clear in the covering email
- official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with private office
- differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

### **Speeches**

#### **Key points**

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

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

## Humza Yousaf – Cabinet Secretary for Justice

### Engagement briefing

There are a number of different types of engagement briefings. These can be when Mr Yousaf has been invited to give a speech, to cut a ribbon and mark an occasion, or when he is invited to a meeting (often as meeting chair) or a photocall.

These often occur as a result of an invitation or follow-on from correspondence (MACCS mostly). Once the event date is agreed by private office, they will issue a request for briefing and speaking notes, if appropriate, with a deadline (usually at least five working days before the event).

- the lead official should contact the organisers to discuss directly what is expected/required from Mr Yousaf well before the briefing is due to private office. Is a PowerPoint presentation required with speaking bullets, or a speech?
- liaise with communications colleagues to ensure handling considerations have been thought through – communications will then decide if a press officer is required at the event
- consider if the Scottish Parliament should be pre-informed of what Mr Yousaf will announce, for example a draft letter could be sent to the relevant parliamentary committee outlining any announcement.
- use the engagement briefing template which will contain at least the following sections. Delete fields that are not relevant, and keep the briefing short, focused and use plain English:
  - highlight the main message and purpose of Mr Yousaf's attendance
  - provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. If the location is difficult to find, detailed local directions are required (no Google map links). For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
  - ensure there is a space for Mr Yousaf's car and consider personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for both Mr Yousaf and private secretary
  - biographies of key people (and photos if possible). If councillors are involved state their party
  - an event running order
  - an outline composition of the attendees/audience, MSP/councillor attendance and numbers
  - current issues, links to wider Scottish Government policy and relevant facts and figures
  - suggested lines for Mr Yousaf to take/use and concise Q&A on topics likely to be raised
- for formal meetings with Mr Yousaf chairing, provide a chair's steering brief covering each agenda item
- incorporate all documents related to the event within the engagement briefing template except for speeches. These should be in a separate Word document, and sent within the same covering email and the engagement briefing
- official support is expected at all engagements unless otherwise advised by private office, and the number of officials should be kept to a minimum
- if the engagement is a closed, uncontroversial photocall there should be a discussion with private office and communications colleagues regarding official support

- inform private office of any changes to the event, lines to take, attendees or official support. If providing an updated engagement briefing pack highlight changes/updates in yellow
- officials should arrive at the engagement early as Mr Yousaf may request a pre-meet

## Speeches

- there are a number of types of speeches for events, differing in length, tone and style
- contact the organisers to discuss directly what is expected/required from Mr Yousaf – for example is a PowerPoint presentation required with speaking notes or just a speech? Is a background slide required to give Mr Yousaf's title?
- consider in detail the main message, purpose and audience
- consider including cross-cutting connections to wider/other policy areas across the portfolio and wider Scottish Government. Include relevant links to Mr Yousaf's previous portfolio responsibilities where this could be of benefit
- full written speeches should be a maximum of 10 minutes long. For short, informal speeches of two to five minutes, bullet points should be used
- Mr Yousaf speaks at 150 words per minute. Please reduce speeches by 15-20% to allow for personal additions or, if a speech for parliament, interventions from MSPs
- use headings for each section of the speech. Use page numbers and Arial font size 16 and 1.5 line spacing
- keep each paragraph short and sharp ensuring that these do not run over into the next page
- think about announcements or good news for inclusion in the speech. Also any interesting and relevant personal/local mentions including about the venue/quotes
- consider if the chair or another speaker is worthy of a special mention, for example a recent OBE/award
- make the speech engaging and interesting with a logical structure, tailored to the audience and occasion. Always read it out loud to yourself and colleagues
- consider if there is an experienced speechwriter in your team/wider team who could assist
- consider seeking input from communications and special advisers at the initial drafting stage. Check with private office if Mr Yousaf would like sight of a draft in advance of the main briefing pack
- include speeches as a separate Word document in your covering email
- if providing an updated speech, highlight the changes in yellow

## Correspondence

Mr Yousaf receives considerable correspondence. Depending on who is writing, these letters may be responded to as official replies (a letter from the relevant official) In other cases, Mr Yousaf replies himself. Correspondence is allocated to action officers on the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS) and they will receive an email notification.

- consider in detail the contents of the letter and the issues/questions raised
- check that the allocation is correct. Ministers always reply in person to constituents. Call private office/the ministerial correspondence unit for advice
- duplicate letters to numerous ministers should receive one single Scottish Government reply
- check the urgency of the letter - could/should it be answered quickly?
- often letters will cover an area that is wider than the remit of a team. Contact others quickly to request inputs and contributions to the reply. A fully informed, cross-government reply is appropriate

- the correct letter template should come through on the MACCS system, but it is worth checking this. MACCS is easily searchable for previous copies of scanned signed replies - use this to check the layout
- in the first sentence of the reply, refer to the date of the original correspondence and summarise the points raised
- answer all the points raised with a helpful and understanding tone, avoid general interest details which are not relevant
- many MACCS letters are related to other letters, PQs, and press lines. Be consistent in the lines used but if you are copying and pasting from other material ensure the response is tailored to the correspondence and that all facts and figures are up-to-date
- highlight potentially high profile responses to special advisers and communications colleagues when submitting your draft in MACCS
- use plain English, short words and everyday English and if you have to use technical terms, include an explanation
- complete/delete references as appropriate instead of leaving them blank. For example if there is no 'Your ref,' delete the 'Your ref' from the draft
- at the top left-hand side of the title header, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, the text under the title should read Humza Yousaf MSP at size 9.5 and font Clan-News
- include only the month and year with a space for Mr Yousaf to insert the date
- the main text of the letter should be Arial, font size 12 and left aligned
- leave one space between the reference number and the date. Leave four lines between the date and the first line and four lines between the final words and **HUMZA YOUSAF**
- before submitting the case with a reply in MACCS, check it through thoroughly, if the letter is incorrect, it will be returned to the action officer
- if a MACCS case is returned to you for redraft, check the 'case history' notes for the details
- once a letter issues, check the final version against the version you sent to see if amendments have been made. Ensure these are incorporated into any further cases, and if relevant PQs and/or media lines. Significant changes are not usually made without consultation with action officers

### Diary cases

Mr Yousaf receives diary requests and invitations for attendance at events. These letters are also processed on the MACCS system and allocated to action officers for advice and ministerial replies and they will receive an email notification.

- consider in detail the profile of the invitation
- always include an 'accept' and a 'decline' reply unless advised otherwise by private office
- complete the associated Private Secretary minute (which is your advice to the Mr Yousaf regarding whether to accept or decline) deleting fields which are not relevant and keeping your advice short and to the point
- a private office recommendation is only required for date-specific requests. If this recommendation differs from your advice, this should be clearly stated in the recommendation section
- diary replies (both accept and decline) should be short and focused without additional detail
- seek communications input on your recommendation
- diary cases are usually signed by Mr Yousaf's Private Secretary, unless the requester is an MP/MSP

## **Ash Denham – Minister for Community Safety**

### **Engagement briefing**

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

Make sure you use the correct internal or external engagement briefing templates.

Observe deadlines for engagement briefing – Ms Denham likes to see briefing in advance so plan ahead to get it up in good time.

### **Key points**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

Briefing should be signed off by a deputy director and special adviser. If unsure, speak with private office in good time.

### **Speeches**

#### **Speaking engagements**

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

#### **Meetings**

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

#### **Debates/committee**

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

### **Tips**

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

### **Format**

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

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

### **Speech Box**

Clear message of speech

Layout of room - round table, theatre style etc.

Lectern or sitting as part of a panel?

Make-up of the audience?

How many are attending?

What do they want to hear?

Any media interest?

Have special advisers and communications colleagues been consulted?

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

## **Fergus Ewing – Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy**

### **Engagement Briefing**

#### **Key Points**

- Please ensure that you use the Cabinet Secretary's preferred briefing template for either engagements or meetings.
- Briefing should always follow the structure laid out in the template [link] including the sequence of the annexes [link to further information on structure of the briefing]. For briefings with more than 6 annexes (e.g. A to F) please list annexes as page numbers on the contents page (e.g. 1 to 25) instead of using letters of the alphabet – as this aids the Cabinet Secretary in locating the information more easily in a larger briefing pack and reduces the need of tabbing each annex
- Email briefing and speeches one week before the event
- An address and postcode (checked with the organisers) should be provided to the PO Diary Secretary as far in advance as possible. Briefing should include the postcode/map/directions venue contacts. Please check the details carefully as incomplete/confusing directions lead to delays and stress
- Provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- Ensure any official attending an event with 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 them to advise of travel delays or check on last minute logistics or points of detail. Officials are expected to be available just before the engagement starts in case Mr Ewing requires a pre-brief.
- Briefings should be short, succinct and have an easy to follow structure. For regular meetings 8 pages maximum. Briefings for larger meetings that the Cabinet Secretary is chairing should include a steering brief but should still be kept as succinct as possible.
- Request a lectern at the venue and note on the briefing and if not, advise the layout i.e. speaking from a table etc.
- Speaking notes should always be submitted as separate documents (and contain page numbers). Please refer to the more detailed section for speech preferences
- Any amendments required after the briefing has been submitted may require to be written in by Private Office, so please use track changes or make them very clear in the covering email.
- Official support should be assumed for all visits or meetings, unless agreed otherwise with Private Office.
- Please differentiate your briefing to ensure it is sufficient and proportionate for the needs of the event or meeting. For example:

#### **Meetings with key stakeholders, Ministers of other Governments, Major conferences and high profile events**

- Ideally a maximum of 20 pages (number pages and don't embed documents in word documents (they can get missed in our printing)
- Cover sheet/Index
- Agenda
- Meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- Background on key issues to be discussed
- If there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since

- Q&A
- Bios on meeting attendees (not previously met)
- Provide a full delegate list
- Speaking Note - if required

#### **Meetings with external stakeholders, Receptions or Events, including dinners etc.**

- Similar to above but ideally no more than 8 pages.

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

- Logistic briefing only - no more than 6 pages
- Why Cab Sec/Minister is attending
- When, where, what and who, guest list, bios as above
- Any key local or topical issues to be aware of

#### **Parliamentary Engagements**

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

- Cover Sheet
- Key messages to get across
- Summary of relevant Manifesto commitments and progress in achieving them
- Likely areas of opposition attack and rebuttals
- background briefing on key issues (including third party quotes)
- Speaking Note - see relevant section
- Historical context, including key facts or figures (not covered above)
- Summary of any previous evidence sessions

Briefing should be signed off by a Deputy Director and the Special Adviser before being sent to Private Office.

#### **Speeches**

##### **Key points**

Mr Ewing always:

- Needs to know who is in the audience - get this from the organiser
- Needs to see any agenda. If a conference there is usually one and a theme. There may also be papers such as a glossy brochure. Very important to get hold of this and associated papers. Will help form a relevant speech to the occasion.
- Needs the facts, and then views. Bullet points are usually enough. Keep it simple. Usually wishes to record where there is an UKG responsibility and set out the facts on that.
- Likes to get speeches 1 week before the event to check over and to allow time to commission more information, check facts or briefing.
- Does not like long complex sentences full of abstract nouns
- Does like helpful factual material - and detail of relevant facts

- Prefers bullet points, as a guide you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a 5 minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech.
- The Cabinet Secretary speaks at about 120 words a minute.
- Speeches should be in Arial 16 with 1.5 spacing
- Paragraphs should be no longer than 2 or 3 lines
- Page breaks should be at the end of a sentence. Paragraphs should not run over pages
- Ensure pages are numbered
- Include examples of things Mr Ewing has done in his ministerial capacity
- Involve Communications and SpAds in draftin
- Always check the speech for accuracy – facts and figures should be checked and double checked
- Speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered!
- Avoid using acronyms and jargon. Remember this is being spoken
- The Cabinet Secretary likes to speak at a lectern. Please request this if possible

Drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact Private Office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. Further advice can also be found [we will add a link to the new speechwriting guide].

Please consider the below when drafting a speech:

- Make the speech relevant to the event
- Who are the audience and what do they want to hear about
- The speech should use positive language
- Please do not recycle or copy and paste parts of previous speeches on the same subject
- Try to avoid getting bogged down in policy unless necessary
- Include the big picture context - start and end with the big picture
- Include some relevant context, especially in the introduction
- Include any constitutional points that are appropriate
- Cover hot issues and topical subjects
- Potential announcements - This should be discussed with Communications colleagues.
- Add some colour to the speech - personalise the speech - feel free to include testimonials, startling facts, and quotes.
- It is important to read the speech aloud to identify any potential challenges or problems in delivering it.

## **Correspondence**

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

## **Key Points**

- The Cabinet Secretary attaches great importance to correspondence and would like policy colleagues to draft quick and sympathetic responses to all letters from members of the public

- Mr Ewing will personally respond to all letters from MPs, MSPs, MEPs, Members of the House of Lords, Councillors, Chairpersons/Chief Executives of Public Bodies and key stakeholders, friends/acquaintances, and constituents (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber).
- In each case there is a "main" point the correspondent makes. Replies should show that the Cabinet Secretary has "got it". To do that use "playback" - in other words begin the letter by repeating the main concern raised, simply to show that the Cabinet Secretary has understood the primary issue, concern, point, criticism or whatever is the purpose of the email or letter. Then respond by setting out the facts and then our views. Candour is good. We cannot satisfy all comers, nor should we raise expectations unfairly.
- Use plain English
- Dates should follow SG convention (e.g. 18 October 2016 not 18<sup>th</sup> October...)
- Please remove unnecessary parts of the template (e.g. unused refs, signature etc.) Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put the Minister's name in the signature space – i.e. letter should be ready to print and not need further editing by Private Office
- Leave 4 lines between the date and the start of the letter for the "Dear x" to be handwritten and 6 lines between the end of the letter and the Cabinet Secretary's name for the signature.
- We check the MACCS system regularly for all draft responses for clearance so there is no need to phone/email to alert us.
- Please ensure that any MACCS cases that are either political or sensitive, i.e. relate to a current hot topic, are cleared by the Special Adviser in advance of submitting to PO

Guidance is listed below in alphabetical order:

<b>Address</b>	<p><b>MSPs</b> - please use the reply address provided on the letter (link to Cab Sec's template). MACCS will default to the Parliament address, but many MSPs now request that replies are sent to their constituency address or will only list their constituency as the reply address. Please also ensure that if the incoming letter has a reference, this is copied in the response under 'Your Ref'.</p> <p><b>Constituents</b> - When an MSP/MP writes on behalf of their constituent, please refer to the constituent by name and state their address if given.</p> <p><b>Email</b> - some correspondents prefer to receive their response by email, or do not give a postal address. If there is only an email address, please put this under the correspondent's name at the top of the letter. Once the letter has been signed off, it will be scanned and emailed by Private Office.</p>
<b>Contact Details</b>	<p>When drafting an acceptance to an invitation, please include a sentence asking the correspondent to contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary, Ellie Fairgrieve, via email at CabSecRE@gov.scot to make the necessary arrangements. (See also Invitations)</p>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open the letter with some background, e.g. "Thank you for your letter of x about..."</li> <li>• Please ensure the response answers the points raised by the correspondent.</li> <li>• Avoid "general interest" details, which do not answer the question asked.</li> <li>• If cutting and pasting from previous correspondence, please ensure that the response is tailored to the current correspondent and that all facts and figures are up to date.</li> </ul>
<b>Co-ordinated responses</b>	<p>Many MACCS cases are related to PQs, Press releases etc. Please ensure that the all facts and figures are consistent.</p>
<b>Date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please refer to the date of the original letter in the response.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you send up the response at the end/beginning of a month, please check that the letter is dated appropriately. If in doubt it is often best to date a response with the new month as, depending on Mr Ewing's box arrangements, it may be into the next month before the letter is signed</li> </ul>
<b>Delays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the response is &gt;4 weeks since the original letter was written, please include an apology for the delay in replying.</li> <li>If the MACCS case is not sent up to the Cabinet Secretary within the PO deadline, please include a short note explaining the delay.</li> </ul>
<b>Font</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main text of the letter should always be Arial, font size 12</li> <li>Please note that the St Andrews House address details, our ref and date are formatted. Please do not reformat.</li> </ul>
<b>Diary Invitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a valid postal/email address is put on the final reply letters - this is important so we can make sure the letter reaches the correct recipient.</li> <li>Make sure the final reply letters are signed off by the Private Secretary rather than the Cabinet Secretary. Private office sends out all accept/reject letters; the Cabinet Secretary does not sign these off.</li> <li>Please ensure that the PS Minute includes all specific policy details/key points/comms views - the more information given the more likely the Cabinet Secretary will make a firm decision.</li> <li>Flag up any diary cases that are going to be sent up <b>late</b> - especially if it is an event that is in the near future. This allows us to let the organisation know well before the event is taking place.</li> <li>Last but not least - please ensure that the grammar/spelling is accurate - in Private Office we don't have time to change all the letters individually so this is a great help!!</li> </ul> <p><i>Sample diary case responses:</i></p> <p>Accept:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, to attend your Annual Conference.</p> <p>Mr Ewing would be delighted to accept your invitation subject to Parliamentary business, I would be grateful if you could contact the Minister's Diary Secretary, Lauren Wilson, via email at CabSecRE@gov.scot to arrange a mutually convenient date/make the necessary arrangements.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[REDACTED]</b> <b>PRIVATE SECRETARY</b></p> <p>Decline:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of 1 January inviting Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, to attend your Annual Conference.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Mr Ewing will be unable to accept your invitation. Please accept his apologies and best wishes for a successful event.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[REDACTED]</b> <b>PRIVATE SECRETARY</b></p>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please consider who will be reading the response e.g. children/young people.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the reply is clear, concise, and written in a language that is easily understood. See SG writing guide for reference.</li> <li>• Please do not use unnecessary phrases at the beginning of sentences e.g.: "I am writing to..."; "First of all,..."; "I have to advise you that..."; "Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to set out some general background about...".</li> <li>• Keep sentences short and avoid jargon.</li> <li>• If a case is reallocated to Fergus Ewing for answer the phrase "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise" should be used.</li> <li>• Please do not use the phrase "I am afraid". An alternative is "Unfortunately".</li> <li>• Please do not use the phrase, "Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene". An alternative wording is "it is not appropriate for Scottish Ministers to intervene".</li> <li>• Where appropriate add, "I hope this is helpful" at the end of a response.</li> </ul>	
Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to fit the reply on one page, but do not make the font smaller to do so.</li> <li>• Please do not alter the default page set-up. If drafting a letter out with MACCS, please use the Ministerial Template found in the Scottish Ministers folder in Microsoft Word.</li> <li>• Please leave four lines free at the top between the date and the start of the letter and six lines at bottom of the text of the response to allow the Cabinet Secretary to add his signature.</li> <li>• If, due to the above formatting, the Minister's name is the only thing on the second page, insert an appropriate page break to ensure that either two full sentences or the last paragraph is moved onto the second page.</li> <li>• Please do not use <b>SUBJECT TITLES</b> at the beginning of letter, instead incorporate in opening sentence "Thank you for your letter of 1 January about....."</li> <li>• Please do not use paragraph numbering.</li> <li>• Ensure that unused text boxes are removed as these will appear in the final draft i.e. &lt;&lt; text&gt;&gt; , Your ref, signature.</li> <li>• Please ensure that the Cabinet Secretary's name at the bottom of the letter is in bold and capitals in the centre of the letter "<b>FERGUS EWING</b>".</li> <li>• The PS's signature should also be at the left hand side of the page as detailed below.</li> <li>• Text should be centre justified.</li> </ul>	
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	Ministerial Replies can be reallocated so that Mr Ewing is answering on behalf of another Cabinet Secretary/Minister who received the original letter. Please thank the correspondent for their letter to the original Cabinet Secretary/Minister and add, "I am replying as I have portfolio responsibility for the issues you raise".	
Signature	Letters for the Minister's signature (in the centre of the page)	<b>FERGUS EWING</b>

	Letters for PS/Mr Ewing's signature (in the centre of the page)	<b>[REDACTED] PRIVATE SECRETARY</b>
<b>Spelling</b>	Please use spell checker and proof read the response before issuing it.	
<b>Timing</b>	It is always helpful if cases can reach the Cabinet Secretary as soon as possible as this allows extra time for discussion, if necessary.	
<b>Titles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please include the full title of the correspondent i.e. Director/Chairman/Convener.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Do not use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless the correspondent does.</li> <li>• Do not use Esquire after a name.</li> </ul>	

## Shirley-Anne Somerville – Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People

### Engagement briefing

Official support is expected at all engagements. Any exceptions to this must be agreed with private office in advance. Where an exception is agreed, a named official should be contactable immediately ahead of the engagement to answer any last minute requests.

Supporting officials should play an active role, particularly around ensuring that the event runs to time/agenda and facilitating valuable discussion.

### Briefing/Speeches

Use the correct briefing template as per the table below and send as a Word document – not eRDM.

Guidance is included within the template. Providing accurate logistical information in your briefing is paramount - particularly times and location, including postcode and attendees. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information in the diary invite is correct. If it isn't, contact private office in advance of the briefing being submitted.

Submit your briefing one week ahead of the engagement unless an alternative deadline is agreed with private office.

Speeches should always be submitted as separate documents and have page numbers. See speech preferences.

If briefing requires amendment after it has been submitted, please phone private office before re-submitting. An amended section or additional annex is often better than resubmitting the whole briefing, particularly for parliamentary debates.

There are four separate categories of engagements which each require a different level of briefing. This is guidance only - it is impossible to cover every eventuality.

Category	Type of event	Template
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>parliamentary debates</li><li>committee appearances</li></ul>	Engagements template
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ministerial Working Groups</li><li>bi-lateral meetings with ministers of other governments</li><li>meetings with key stakeholders to discuss significant issues</li><li>major conference/ event with key role/ speech/question and answer</li><li>events likely to have significant media interest</li></ul>	Briefing should be signed off by deputy director Meetings template or engagements template should be used as appropriate Maximum of 20 pages

Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings with external stakeholders</li> <li>• receptions and events including dinners</li> </ul>	Meetings template
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routine visits/engagements</li> <li>• photo-ops</li> </ul>	<p>Maximum of 10 pages Engagements template</p> <p>Maximum of 6 pages</p>

### **Correspondence**

Read the guidance on handling ministerial correspondence using the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS).

- wherever possible a reply will be sent out electronically. If possible, provide an email address directly under the final line of the address. Even when sending electronically the full postal address should always be typed in full where that is available
- when replying to MSPs, ensure you use the reply address – MACCS will often default to parliament
- begin by thanking the sender and refer to the date it was sent. If our response is late, provide an explanation
- if the original correspondence was sent to another minister but Ms Somerville is replying, acknowledge that
- for all diary acceptance replies please include the following text in your draft:

'Please note that all engagements accepted by the Cabinet Secretary are subject to Parliamentary business and can change at short notice.'

Please contact the Cabinet Secretary's diary secretary at [cabsecSSOP@gov.scot](mailto:cabsecSSOP@gov.scot) to finalise arrangements.'

Left justify the signature and sign it:

**SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE** for Ministerial Replies, or

**[REDACTED]**

**Private Secretary** for diary replies

## Christina McKelvie – Minister for Older People and Equalities

### Engagement Briefing / Speeches

Use the correct briefing template as per the table below and send as a Word document – not eRDM.

Guidance is included within the template. Providing accurate logistical information in your briefing is paramount - particularly times and location, including postcode and attendees. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information in the diary invite is correct. If it isn't, contact private office in advance of the briefing being submitted.

Submit your briefing one week ahead of the engagement unless an alternative deadline is agreed with Private Office.

Speeches should always be submitted as separate documents and have page numbers. See speech preferences.

If briefing requires amendment after it has been submitted, please phone Private Office before re-submitting. An amended section or additional annex is often better than resubmitting the whole briefing, particularly for parliamentary debates.

Speech requirements vary based on the engagement. If appropriate, a pre-meeting will be arranged in advance to discuss speech requirements. If drafting a speech for Parliament or a high profile keynote, a light rough draft should be submitted well in advance for the Minister to comment on and give direction.

ENGAGEMENTS	Bullet points with key messages
COMMITTEE APPEARANCES	Verbatim speech
DEBATES	Opening – verbatim speech Closing – key messages and rebuttals only

Whilst drafting:

- Consider the format of the event.
- Think carefully about the audience that the speech is intended for. For example, if the audience will principally be young people then don't make it too heavy on policy.
- Speeches should have a clear structure, flow, and be free of jargon and clichés. Avoid cutting and pasting from previous speeches or pasting together separate contributions.
- Be clear on what the speech is trying to achieve. Summarise that at the start; work through the body of the speech with that clearly in mind; and conclude by summarising the key message(s) again.
- Avoid lengthy phrases which can be shortened. For example, “at this moment in time” can be “now” or “right now.”
- Always read the speech out loud. This is the best way to pick up on things such as repetitiveness or lack of natural breathing space.

When formatting, consider:

- Ms McKelvie speaks at around 150 words a minute. If time/word count is strict (for example for a debate), consider highlighting paragraphs that could be dropped without affecting the flow of the speech or omitting key information.

- Do not allow sentences/paragraphs to be split between two pages. Use a page break to start a new page.
- Text should be Arial, size 18 with 1.5 paragraph spacing.
- Number all speech pages.
- Speeches should always be sent up as a separate word document to the wider briefing pack.

## **Correspondence**

Comprehensive guidance on MACCS can be found on Saltire.

- Wherever possible a reply will be sent out electronically. If possible, provide an email address directly under the final line of the address. Even when sending electronically the full postal address should always be typed in full where that is available.
- When replying to MSPs, ensure you use the reply address – MACCS will often default to Parliament.
- Begin by thanking the sender and refer to the date it was sent. If our response is late, provide an explanation.
- If the original correspondence was sent to another minister but Ms McKelvie is replying, acknowledge that.
- For all diary acceptance replies please include the following text in your draft:

”Please note that all engagements accepted by the Minister are subject to Parliamentary business and can change at short notice.

Please contact the Minister’s diary secretary at [MinisterOPE@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterOPE@gov.scot) to finalise arrangements.”

Left justify the signature and sign it:

CHRISTINA MCKELVIE for Ministerial Replies; or

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary for diary replies.

## **Michael Matheson – Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity**

### **Engagement briefing**

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

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

- maximum 20 pages unless agreed otherwise with private office
- cover sheet
- agenda
- meeting objective(s) and what outcome(s) are desired (this should be succinct)
- background on key issues to be discussed
- if there was a previous meeting, a note of that and progress since
- Q&A
- bios (and pictures if possible) for meeting attendees not previously met
- speaking note - if required - see speech preferences

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

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

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

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

### **Parliamentary engagements**

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

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

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

### **Speeches**

- Mr Matheson speaks at 120 words per minute. Speeches should be Arial, 16 point, with 1.5 spacing
- keep paragraphs very short and avoid breaking sentences over the page where possible
- speeches should always be sent up as a separate Word document to the wider briefing pack - and pages should always be numbered
- use section headings to break the speech up. Speeches should have a beginning, a middle and an end, and should flow rather than jumping from topic to topic. Avoid adding jokes, light-hearted tangents, or flowery language – speeches should be drafted pretty straight, and he can embellish it himself if he wants to
- avoid using acronyms and jargon - remember this is being spoken
- speeches shouldn't normally be more than about 10 minutes long, though you can discuss this with private office. Mr Matheson is usually happy to do Q&A after a speech
- for big set-piece events Mr Matheson expects all speeches to be written out verbatim. For a 5-10 minute speaking slot, bullets are preferable
- draft speeches for significant events should to be sent to us two weeks in advance in order to allow time for Mr Matheson to consider and provide feedback
- as a guide, you should provide no more than 1-2 pages of bullet points for a 5 minute speech and no more than 3-4 pages for a 10 minute speech
- drafting a speech is challenging, so be sure to draw on experienced colleagues for advice and contact private office for direction on the type of speech and structure expected. We can provide an example of a good speech if that would help. Further advice can also be found in writing a speech
- if providing Q&A briefing, be realistic about how much you're providing – Mr Matheson doesn't have time to read and memorise 50 pages of background briefing. Prioritise key lines that are likely to come up. Consider the audience – if it is broadly supportive, he won't need a lot of briefing; if it is more hostile, prioritise the tricky questions that they're likely to ask, rather than the questions you'd like them to ask
- where possible include examples of things Mr Matheson has seen or done in a ministerial capacity
- involve communications colleagues in drafting the speech
- always include a word count and note of the allocated time at the end of the speaking note

## **Correspondence**

### **Ministerial Replies**

Mr Matheson likes to respond personally to:

- his own constituents (Falkirk West Constituency)
- Chief Executives
- MSPs/MPs/MEPs
- elected members from other administrations
- councillors/conveners
- key stakeholders

### **Key points**

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

### **Non-MACCS correspondence**

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

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

## **Paul Wheelhouse – Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands**

### **Engagement briefing**

- use the briefing template provided
- email briefing and speeches five working days in advance of an event
- provide a map (where required), postcode, address, organisation name, contact names and numbers. Check details carefully and with the organisers. For remote locations or large sites, it would also be helpful to provide a grid reference. You can find a latitude and longitude reference on Google maps, by right clicking on a point and then selecting 'What's here?'. Please also copy your briefing to Government Car Service
- provide a full delegate list for events
- request for a lectern for Mr Wheelhouse at the venue
- number pages and don't embed documents in Word documents (they get missed when printed)
- include mobile numbers of supporting officials in the briefing
- for full day visits to multiple sites, send an outline two weeks before with details of attendees and discuss the need for a pre-brief with private office

### **Speeches**

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

### **Correspondence**

- we check the Ministerial and Corporate Correspondence System (MACCS) regularly for draft responses sent for clearance, so there is no need to phone or email to alert us to these
- use plain English
- responses should be as helpful as possible (as for Parliamentary Questions). Always address the question(s) or issue(s) raised by the correspondent directly. Ideally, letters should begin along the lines of 'I think the key points you raise are x and x and I will address them in turn...'
- correspondence relating to issues such as job losses should be as empathetic as possible, for example 'I am very disappointed...'
- where appropriate, when declining diary cases, leave the possibility of a future meeting open
- when referring to the Scottish or UK Government, state clearly each time which you mean, not just 'Government'

- use Mr Wheelhouse's full title
- dates should follow the Scottish Government convention (for example, 15 May 2016, not 15<sup>th</sup> May)
- remove unnecessary parts of the letter template (for example, unused refs, 'signature' etc). Include the month and year at the top (day will be written in) and put Mr Wheelhouse's name in the signature space. Letters should be ready to print and not need further editing by private office
- leave four lines between the date and the start of the letter for the 'Dear x' to be handwritten, and eight lines between the end of the letter and Mr Wheelhouse's name for the signature
- always proof read
- when considering diary cases, bear in mind that Mr Wheelhouse uses Mondays and Fridays for constituency work. Don't hesitate to call to discuss.