

[REDACTED] On Behalf Of zzzCabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans 2021-2023

Sent: 17 February 2023 11:17

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Apologies for the short notice request, Mr Brown has a constituency engagement at Dollar Academy on Monday (20 February) and his office have sent through a list of questions that the pupils will be asking him which relate to his Cab Sec role.

[REDACTED] Deputy Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans - Keith Brown MSP

Scottish Government | St Andrews's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG |

[REDACTED]

The Cabinet Secretary's preferences can be found [here](#).

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

### **Questions for Keith Brown MSP**

[REDACTED]

### **This class is Advanced Higher Modern Studies – Politics Option**

[REDACTED]

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

[REDACTED]

VA: Do you think the investigation (Operation Branchform) into fraud has played a role in Sturgeon's resignation and do you feel that this will have a significant impact on the party's image or on how her time in office will be remembered?

**[REDACTED]**

**From:** McAllister C (Colin) <[Colin.McAllister@gov.scot](mailto:Colin.McAllister@gov.scot)>  
**Sent:** 27 February 2023 10:58  
**To:** Nicolson S (Stuart) (Special Adviser) <[Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot](mailto:Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** RE: First Minister / police

I will call him.

C

Sent with BlackBerry Work ([www.blackberry.com](http://www.blackberry.com))

---

**From:** [\[REDACTED\]@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@the-sun.co.uk)  
**Sent:** 27 Feb 2023 10:25  
**To:** "McAllister C (Colin)" <[Colin.McAllister@gov.scot](mailto:Colin.McAllister@gov.scot)>; "Nicolson S (Stuart) (Special Adviser)" <[Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot](mailto:Stuart.Nicolson@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** First Minister / police

Hi - Can we check: Has the First Minister been interviewed by/spoken to police investigating alleged SNP fundraising fraud (Operation Branchform)?

thanks

--

[REDACTED]  
The Scottish Sun  
[REDACTED]

--

"Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail"

This e-mail and any attachments are confidential, may be legally privileged and are the property of News Corp UK & Ireland Limited on whose systems they were generated. News Corp UK & Ireland Limited is the holding company for the News UK group, is registered in England & Wales under number 81701, has its registered office at 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF and is registered with VAT number GB 243 8054 69. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately and do not use, distribute, store or copy it in any way. Statements or opinions in this e-mail or any attachment are those of the author and are not necessarily agreed or authorised by News Corp UK & Ireland Limited or any member of its group. News Corp UK & Ireland Limited may monitor outgoing or incoming emails as permitted by law. It accepts no liability for viruses introduced by this e-mail or attachments.

News Corp UK & Ireland Limited and its titles are committed to abiding by IPSO's regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces.

-----Original Message-----

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot> On Behalf Of zzzFirst Minister 2021 to 2023

Sent: 05 April 2023 09:57

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Cc: Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

[REDACTED],

I anticipate we will be asked when the FM knew about the arrest.

For your information, the email from Perm Sec details this first update hope this is helpful for a media line.

Chris

Chris Mackie

Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

[REDACTED]

From: John-Paul Marks <[John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot](mailto:John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot)>

Sent: 05 April 2023 09:42

To: First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>

Cc: Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>; Colin McAllister <[Colin.McAllister@gov.scot](mailto:Colin.McAllister@gov.scot)>

Subject: RE: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

Thank you in terms of SG media response, important of course that we (SG) do not comment on Police investigations. I see this is now in the public domain from PS, so

do liaise with Comms Chris as you judge necessary so they handle with care please.  
JP

From: Christopher Mackie <[Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot](mailto:Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot)> On Behalf Of First Minister  
Sent: 05 April 2023 09:39  
To: John-Paul Marks <[John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot](mailto:John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot)>; First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
Cc: Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>; Colin McAllister <[Colin.McAllister@gov.scot](mailto:Colin.McAllister@gov.scot)>  
Subject: RE: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

I am copying Colin McAllister for his information.

We will also ensure he is copied to any official FM response.

Thanks

Chris

Chris Mackie

Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG  
[REDACTED]

From: John-Paul Marks <[John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot](mailto:John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot)>  
Sent: 05 April 2023 09:20  
To: First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
Cc: Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>  
Subject: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

FM,

As is routine for all high-profile Police Scotland (PS) action, the Chief Constable (CC) contacted me at 8AM this morning to update on Operation Branchform.

Following agreement with the Crown Office, PS have arrested a suspect and taken him into custody to be interviewed under caution.

I informed you after the event and after this PS action had occurred; as is routine, with the explicit permission of the CC.

In terms of any and all liaison from SG Ministers or senior SG officials on Operation Branchform, I have agreed with the CC this should be via me only without exception.

Best wishes,

JP

John-Paul Marks (he/him)

Permanent Secretary

1N-07, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Scottish Ministers, Special Advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** zzzCabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care 2021 to 2023  
**Sent:** 05 April 2023 10:21  
**To:** zzzFirst Minister 2021 to 2023 <zzzfirstminister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

**From:** Humza Yousaf <[Humza.Yousaf@gov.scot](mailto:Humza.Yousaf@gov.scot)>  
**Sent:** 05 April 2023 09:45  
**To:** Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care <[CabSecHSC@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecHSC@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** FW: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

Noted. JP and I have spoken this morning and he has relayed the information to me as per the email below, after the event and with the explicit consent of the Chief Constable.

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 05 April 2023 09:28  
**To:** Humza Yousaf <[Humza.Yousaf@gov.scot](mailto:Humza.Yousaf@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** FW: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

For awareness.

[REDACTED]

**Private Secretary  
Office of the First Minister**

5<sup>th</sup> Floor | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [REDACTED]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Please note Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot) for information.

**From:** John-Paul Marks <[John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot](mailto:John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot)>  
**Sent:** 05 April 2023 09:20  
**To:** First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

FM,

As is routine for all high-profile Police Scotland (PS) action, the Chief Constable (CC) contacted me at 8AM this morning to update on Operation Branchform.

Following agreement with the Crown Office, PS have arrested a suspect and taken him into custody to be interviewed under caution.

I informed you after the event and after this PS action had occurred; as is routine, with the explicit permission of the CC.

In terms of any and all liaison from SG Ministers or senior SG officials on Operation Branchform, I have agreed with the CC this should be via me only without exception.

Best wishes,

JP

**John-Paul Marks (he/him)**

Permanent Secretary

1N-07, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Scottish Ministers, Special Advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016.  
See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

**In the service  
of Scotland**



Integrity



Inclusion



Collaboration



Innovation



Kindness



-----Original Message-----

From: Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>

Sent: 05 April 2023 10:23

To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary

<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce

<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Lisa Mcguinness <Lisa.Mcguinness@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Arrest

[REDACTED] - I am happy that this is a true reflection of the process.

[REDACTED]

Hope this is helpful please let me know.

Thanks

Chris

Chris Mackie

Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

[REDACTED]

From: [\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>

Sent: 05 April 2023 10:01

To: Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot >; Andrew Bruce <[Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot](mailto:Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot)>; Lisa

Mcguinness <[Lisa.Mcguinness@gov.scot](mailto:Lisa.Mcguinness@gov.scot)>

Cc: : [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; : Christopher Mackie

<Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot> Subject: RE: Arrest

Tweaked to reflect language shared by Chris from a separate copy list.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>

Sent: 05 April 2023 09:59

To: Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>; >;

[\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>;; Andrew Bruce <[Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot](mailto:Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot)>; Lisa  
McGuinness <[Lisa.Mcguinness@gov.scot](mailto:Lisa.Mcguinness@gov.scot)>

Cc: : [\[REDACTED\]@gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@gov.scot)>>

Subject: Arrest

While the Police Scotland investigation in to SNP finances and the arrest today are a matter for the party, we may be asked whether/when the First Minister was informed in advance.

Suggest something along the lines of:

As is routine with high profile Police Scotland action, the First Minister was informed through official channels after the arrest was made and shortly before it was confirmed publicly.

Grateful for views and happy to chat through if easier.

[REDACTED]



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



**Daniel Johnson MSP**

05 April 2023

Mr John-Paul Marks  
Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear John-Paul,

I write regarding the arrest of Peter Murrell in connection with the funding and finances of the Scottish National Party.

As you will be aware, there is significant public interest in this case which is why transparency is extremely important. To that end I would appreciate if you can clarify whether the former First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon advised you of Police Scotland's interest in either her or her husband, Peter Murrell.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Johnson  
MSP for Edinburgh Southern

---

**Daniel Johnson MSP**

MSP for Edinburgh Southern  
134 Comiston Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5QN  
0131 541 2145 | [daniel.johnson.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:daniel.johnson.msp@parliament.scot)

**From:** Christopher Mackie <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 18 April 2023 09:47  
**To:** John-Paul Marks <John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot>; zzzFirst Minister 2021 to 2023  
<zzzfirstminister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

Perm Sec,

I am acknowledging receipt of the below message and copying Colin McAllister for his information.

Thanks

Chris

**Chris Mackie**

Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister  
5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG  
[REDACTED]



**From:** John-Paul Marks <[John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot](mailto:John-Paul.Marks@gov.scot)>  
**Sent:** 18 April 2023 09:02  
**To:** zzzFirst Minister 2021 to 2023 <[zzzfirstminister@gov.scot](mailto:zzzfirstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** PRIVATE OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Operation Branchform

Chris, PS/FM, further to below,

I am writing to record that I spoke to the FM earlier this morning to confirm further Police Scotland action with regards Operation Branchform, relating to the SNP Party Treasurer.

I informed the FM after the PS action had taken place, on advice from the Chief Constable.

As per below, in terms of any and all liaison from SG Ministers or senior SG officials on Operation Branchform, I have agreed with the CC this should be via me only without exception.

I would advise *no comment on live investigations*.

JP

**John-Paul Marks (he/him)**  
Permanent Secretary  
1N-07, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Scottish Ministers, Special Advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016.  
See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

In the service  
of Scotland



Integrity



Inclusion



Collaboration



Innovation



Kindness

[REDACTED]