

**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 14 February 2023 17:19

**To:** Grant J (Julie) <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Mackintosh E (Emily) <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; [Redacted]

**Subject:** Press Conference Wednesday 15 February

Afternoon all,

The First Minister will hold a general press conference in Bute House tomorrow morning at 1100.

I would be grateful if all necessary arrangements can be taken forward.

Happy to discuss further.

[Redacted]

**[Redacted]**

Senior Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | **[Redacted]**

**From:** McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 14 February 2023 17:41  
**To:** Mackintosh E (Emily) <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; McCaig C (Callum) <Callum.Mccaig@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>; Mackie C (Christopher) <Christopher.Mackie@gov.scot>; [Redacted]; [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Media briefing tomorrow

As of 1700, the magic circle will be those on this copylist plus: [Redacted], Mackie, [Redacted], JP, DFM, Ross I and Keith.

We will convene a wider Spad call tomorrow am to brief our colleagues but, following on from our conversations today, below is a quick run-down of various points for awareness / action:

- Media Briefing  
Emily to lead for Spads  
Plan is for ~11am (a little after actually for TV purposes). Call notice will issue tomorrow ~0900.  
Standard media briefing invite list. No silly exclusions. We will speak to BBC and Sky in advance to encourage Live coverage. This may lead to leaks but FM comfortable with this.  
FM will make opening remarks circa 10 mins. and then take questions.  
Unlikely to be a question from every journalist but rather as many as feels right to her.
- Opening Remarks  
Liz leading for Spads.  
FM is currently writing (actually just sent it to us).  
She will take (some) edits, I am sure but this is one she wants to largely craft herself (unsurprisingly).  
I anticipate the entire speech will go on the SG website.
- Media Release  
FM Comms will lead from tomorrow as per normal.  
This will largely be drawn from the text of the FM's remarks, topped and tailed with the minimum additions.  
The background note can rehearse some of the logistical points media legitimately needs to know.
- Broadcast sitdowns  
Emily to lead for Spads.  
FM is content to undertake 2 broadcast sitdown interviews in the course of tomorrow: one with the BBC (Glenn) and STV (Colin).  
Time and venue tbc but probably BH drawing room in the afternoon.

#### Follow-up media bids

Comms Spads – Stuart / Ross – can lead alongside party as necessary.  
Keith is happy to take the bulk of significant bids (he is in Glasgow) but we will likely need a second voice. Tomorrow we can consider who but first thought is

Jeanne (she is not currently aware). Minor bids can be picked up by the backbenches.

Briefing can basically be the media release / text of her remarks.

- Advance notice

Callum to lead for Spads.

The FM wishes key people to be aware in advance, albeit perhaps only a few hours (or even minutes) in advance. They will be given a verbal summary of FM's reasons based closely on the text of FM's opening remarks. The list current stands at:

- HRH – presumably not anything formal – Mackie to lead.
- Cabinet and ministers – formally by email at 1055 ahead of the media briefing but all cab secs to get a phonecall from a Spad in the 30 mins before the announcement – Callum to sort / coordinate.
- Lorna & Patrick – Callum to call them in the 30 mins before the announcement.
- Stephen Flynn – I will call him in the morning.
- Michael Russell – I will call him in the morning.
- Westminster Parliamentary Group – email at 1100 – Callum to sort.
- Holyrood Parliamentary Group – email at 1100 – Callum to sort.
- Mark Drakeford – I will call him in the morning.

In addition to above, I will make [Redacted] aware first thing along with [Redacted].

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 13 March 2023 13:38  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Press Conference – Wednesday 15 February



15/02/23 09:12

# Press Conference – Wednesday 15 February

**\*For operational purposes only - not for publication\***

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will hold a press conference this morning (**Wednesday 15 February**).

The press conference will be on record, on camera and hosted in person. Spaces are limited so only one journalist per organisation / outlet can be accommodated. ***A live stream will be made available via the @ScotGov Twitter feed.***

Details on pooled footage will be shared with broadcasters.

## Details

**When:** Wednesday 15 February

**10:40 Attendees arrive**

**11:00 Press conference begins, opening remarks followed by questions**

**Where:** Bute House, 6 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DR

Attendance must be registered and confirmed in advance to [Redacted] and [Redacted] by 1000 this morning Wednesday 15 February.

**Journalists are asked to bring along photographic ID, specifically a passport, driving licence, or NUJ press card. Please note, Scottish Parliament passes cannot be accepted. Due to the layout of the room, latecomers will not be accepted.**

## Contact Information

[Redacted]

Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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# Onclusive

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**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 15 February 2023 10:53

**To:** DL Cabinet Secretaries <DLMPOPCABSEC@gov.scot>; DL Ministers <DLMPOPMIN@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Note from the First Minister

**Importance:** High

Please find a note from the First Minister below. Please bring this to your Cabinet Secretary's and Minister's immediate attention.

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Dear Colleagues,

Being First Minister of Scotland is, in my opinion, the best job in the world. It is a privilege beyond measure - one that has sustained and inspired me, in good times and through the toughest hours of my toughest days.

Since my first moments in the job, I have believed that part of serving well would be to know - almost instinctively - when the time is right to make way for someone else. And when that time comes, to have the courage to do so.

In my head and my heart I know that time is now.

That it is right for me, for our party, and for the country.

And so today, I am announcing my intention to step down as First Minister and leader of our party.

I have asked the National Secretary of the SNP to begin the process of electing a new party leader, and I will remain in office until my successor is in place.

Let me set out - as best I can - my reasons.

I've been First Minister for over 8 years; and I was Deputy First Minister for the best part of 8 years before that. As we all know, these jobs are a privilege. But they are also – rightly - hard. And, it is only possible to give absolutely everything to a job of this nature for so long.

Given the nature and scale of the challenges the country faces, I feel that duty, first and foremost, to our country - to ensure that it does have the energy of leadership it needs, not just today, but through the years that remain of this parliamentary term.

And right now in a very particular sense, I feel it to our party too. We are at a critical moment. The blocking of a referendum as the accepted, constitutional route to independence is a democratic outrage. But it puts the onus on us to decide how Scottish democracy will be protected and to ensure that the will of the Scottish people prevails.

My preference of using the next Westminster election as a de facto referendum is well known. I've never pretended it is perfect - no second best option ever is - nor that there are no alternatives. That is why I have always been clear that the decision must be taken by the SNP collectively, not by me alone.

But I know our party well enough to understand that my view as leader will carry enormous weight when our conference meets next month. And I cannot - in good conscience - ask the party to choose an option based on my judgment whilst not being convinced that I will be there as leader to see it through.

By making my decision clear now, I free the SNP to choose the path it believes to be the right one. Members can make the choice without worrying about what it means for perceptions of my leadership, and they can do so in the knowledge that someone else will now lead it along whatever path is chosen.

One of the difficulties of coming to terms with this decision is that I am confident we can and would lead the SNP to further electoral success. Even in a time of challenge, we remain by far the most trusted party in Scotland.

But the longer any leader is in office, the more opinions about them become fixed and hard to change. Individual polls come and go but I am firmly of the view that there is now majority support for independence. But that support needs to be solidified - and it needs to grow further if our independent Scotland is to have the best possible foundation.

To achieve that we need to reach across the divide in Scottish politics. And my judgment now is that this needs a new leader, a fresh face, someone about whom the minds of almost everyone in the country are not already made up, one way or another. Someone who is not subject to the same polarised opinions, whether fair or not, as I now am.

It has always been my belief that no one individual should be dominant in any system for too long. But, as a leader, while it's easy to hold that view in the abstract, it is harder to live by it.

I consider this decision to be the right one for me, our party and the country. I hope it can also be the right one for our politics. If all parties were to take this opportunity to try to de-polarise public debate just a bit, to focus more on issues, and to reset the tone and tenor of our discourse,

The good news - as the country will now see more clearly perhaps - is that we are not short of talented people in the SNP more than up to that task.

While I am stepping down from leadership, I am not planning to leave politics. There are many issues I care deeply about and hope to champion in future.

One of these is The Promise - the national mission, so close to my heart, to improve the life chances of care experienced young people. Another, obviously, is independence - a cause I have dedicated a lifetime to. A cause I believe in with every fibre of my being.

Since I was 16, I have contributed as an activist, a campaigner and a leader. As we look now to what I do believe is the final furlough in Scotland's journey to independence, I hope to use the experience and perspective I have gathered over all these years to help get us there together.

There will also be time in the days to come for me to say thank you properly to a very long list of people, you all included, without whom I wouldn't have lasted a single day in this job, let alone 8 years.

For now let me say thank you for all you have done for me, the government and the country.

Nicola  
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**[Redacted]**  
**Private Secretary**  
**Office of the First Minister**

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

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