

# RESIGNATION OF SEPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TERRY A'HEARN

## ISSUE:

- Following conduct allegations, SEPA CEO, Terry A'Hearn has resigned.
- SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed.
- In order to protect anonymity, SEPA are not able to say more.
- Recruitment for a new Chief Executive Officer will shortly commence.
- Jo Green will act as Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.
- Several newspapers have run the story including The Scotsman, the Times and The Herald.
- More media interest is expected.

## Top Lines

- In order to protect anonymity, unable to comment further.
- SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed.
- SEPA continues to be a well-run organisation.
- SG will continue to work with SEPA to support their focus on delivering flooding and regulatory services, supporting staff and on the essential development work that is required as they continue to recover from the cyber attack.

## Sequence of Events

06/01/21	SEPA Board Chair, Bob Downes advises Environment and Forestry (EnFor) Director that CEO taking period of paid leave, Jo Green stepping in to deputise as CEO in meantime. Board Chair could not say why time off was being taken or for how long. (Redacted)
10/01/21	Communication to Minister for Environment and Land Reform that SEPA CEO taking a period of paid leave.
13/01/21	SG officials alerted to line of enquiry from BBC journalist on absence of CEO. EnFor Director probed SEPA Board Chair again "Still not in a position to say why Terry is on paid leave. I said if its "personal reasons" why not say so but he said it may be more complicated than that. He said he'd let us know when we can."  Spad alerted.
19/01/21	EnFor Director called by SEPA Board Chair- in late afternoon to advise the SEPA CEO has resigned.
20/01/21	Call with Minister, SEPA Board Chair and SG Officials held at 8:30am to alert Minister resignation due to conduct allegations
21/01/21	SEPA Issue public statement at 13:35.

(Redacted)

**From:** (Redacted)  
**To:** [Turton C \(Cate\); Director of Environment & Forestry](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Scottish Environment Protection Agency: Leadership Arrangements  
**Date:** 21 January 2022 14:21:00

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**Please see update regarding SEPA leadership**

**From:** (Redacted)  
**Sent:** 21 January 2022 14:10  
**To:** (Redacted)  
**Subject:** Scottish Environment Protection Agency: Leadership Arrangements

(Redacted)  
Scottish Government

January 2022

21

Circulation list

(Redacted) -

Dear <sup>(Redacted)</sup>,

Scottish Environment Protection Agency: Leadership Arrangements

I write to inform you that today, Friday, 21st January 2022, Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position as CEO.

Mr. Downes said:

Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.

Mr. Downes confirmed that recruitment for a new Chief Executive would shortly commence and in the interim, Chief Officer, Jo Green would be Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.

Your sincerely,

(Redacted)

Public Affairs

Scottish Environment Protection Agency  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)

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**From:** (Redacted)  
**Subject:** FW: SEPA - CEO Resignation - Draft Note of meeting with Minister & SEPA Chair - final - 20 January 2022  
**Date:** 04 April 2022 08:00:37  
**Attachments:** [SEPA - CEO Resignation - Note of meeting with Minister & SEPA Chair - final - 20 January 2022.docx](#)

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

From: (Redacted)  
Sent: 20 January 2022 18:28  
To: Minister for Environment and Land Reform <MinisterELR@gov.scot>  
Cc: Director of Environment & Forestry <director.enfor@gov.scot>; (Redacted)

(Redacted) Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>;

(Redacted) ermanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>  
Subject: SEPA - CEO Resignation - Draft Note of meeting with Minister & SEPA Chair - final - 20 January 2022

Minister

Please find attached a draft note of the discussion held with SEPA Chair, Bob Downes this morning. It would be helpful if you could read through the content of the short note ahead of the follow up call scheduled with Mr Downes, alongside SG and SEPA officials tomorrow morning (9am).

Regards

(Redacted)

(Redacted) | Head of Environment and Forestry Sponsorship Hub | Future Environment Division | Scottish Government | (Redacted)

## ADVICE TO MINISTERS

### Meeting Note - Minister for E&LR, and Bob Downes (SEPA Chair)

- Internal Meeting Note - 20 January 2022 (08:30)
- Attending: Ms McAllan (Minister), Bob Downes (SEPA), Kevin Quinlan (Director ENFOR), (Redacted) (Deputy Director EQCE), (Redacted) (ENFOR Head of Sponsorship Hub), (Redacted) (Special Adviser)

SEPA had advised SG on 6 January that Mr A'Hearn was taking paid leave from 6 January and that he had appointed Jo Green as Acting CEO. At that time he had not wanted to be drawn on the reasons for the leave and SG asked to be kept updated. (Redacted)

Following a call between the SEPA Chair and Kevin Quinlan late on 19 January, in discussion with Ms McAllan and her officials Mr Downes relayed the news that Terry A'Hearn had resigned from his post on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January.

He explained that this followed allegations (Redacted)

(Redacted)

Mr Downes explained he continued to be very mindful to protect the anonymity and interest of the individuals who raised the issues, Mr A'Hearn and SEPA's and SG's wider reputation.

He added that Jo Green will continue to act as interim CEO for the immediate term. SG and SEPA officials will liaise on procedural points required to put this into effect, noting there will be a requirement to affirm Accountable Officer responsibilities for the Interim CEO to align with Framework Agreement requirements.

Mr Downes is keen to commence preparations for recruitment of a permanent CEO as soon as possible, and indicated external recruitment specialists will likely be necessary to ensure suitable candidates are attracted to this senior role.

#### Post meeting note

SEPA's Board and Senior Management Team were advised of Mr A'Hearn's resignation this afternoon.

SEPA and SG officials met late this afternoon (16:30), where SEPA confirmed their intention to issue a press statement early tomorrow. SG Comms officials are liaising with SEPA counterparts on the content of the press statement and the timing which shall be discussed at your meeting with Mr Downes and SEPA officials tomorrow morning (9am).

The SEPA line is likely to be simply "Following conduct allegations made, the SEPA CEO has stood down". If pressed on why the CEO had resigned the Chair said he is likely to say "I won't breach the confidentiality of those who have made the allegations. At the same time Mr A'Hearn has not been found guilty of misbehaviour but has resigned." Further responsive lines will need to reinforce SEPA's commitment to reinforce its people processes.

## ADVICE TO MINISTERS

**From:** (Redacted)  
**Subject:** FW: In Confidence - SEPA Chief Executive Resignation  
**Date:** 04 April 2022 08:03:04

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**From:** (Redacted)  
**Sent:** 20 January 2022 10:57  
**To:** First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport <CabSecNetZET@gov.scot>; Minister for Environment and Land Reform <MinisterELR@gov.scot>; DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; (Redacted)

Director of Environment & Forestry <director.enfor@gov.scot>; (Redacted)

**Subject:** In Confidence - SEPA Chief Executive Resignation

First Minister

Cc: As above.

In confidence. We request that no forwarding of this e-mail is made by recipients please, due to sensitive nature contained within.

Officials were advised late yesterday afternoon by Bob Downes (SEPA's Board Chair), that Terry A'Hearn (SEPA CEO) has resigned with immediate effect.

(Redacted)

(Redacted)

(Redacted)

SEPA Board members will be advised of Mr A'Hearn's resignation this afternoon, and they plan to issue a press release tomorrow morning. SG officials have requested sight of the draft release before it is issued for publication. We expect

that release to state that the resignation has taken place following allegations made but to protect the privacy of the individuals in SEPA no further comment would be made.

If Ministers are approached for comment, we suggest responding with the following holding line: "We are aware of the situation. It would be inappropriate to comment further while an investigation is ongoing."

Please note this is a developing situation, and a further discussion with the SEPA Board Chair and SG Officials is planned to take place later this afternoon, after SEPA's Board has been notified. Further advice to follow.

Regards

(Redacted)

(Redacted) | Head of Environment and Forestry Sponsorship Hub | Future Environment Division | Scottish Government | (Redacted) |



**From:** (Redacted)  
**To:** [Minister for Environment and Land Reform](#); [Higgins K \(Kate\)](#); [Director of Environment & Forestry](#); [Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands](#); [Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport](#)  
**Cc:** (Redacted) [First Minister](#); [DG Net Zero](#); [Director Propriety and Ethics](#); [Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox](#); (Redacted)  
**Subject:** RE: For clearance - holding line on SEPA CEO  
**Date:** 21 January 2022 13:47:09

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Thank you <sup>(Redacted)</sup>. I have updated that in the text below.

To note, the SEPA statement issued a few minutes ago, following a slight delay.

Best,

(Redacted)

(Redacted) | **Communications: News (Net Zero and Energy)**

Senior Media Manager

Scottish Government, St Andrew's House

(Redacted)

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**From:** (Redacted) > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Environment and Land Reform  
**Sent:** 21 January 2022 13:29  
**To:** (Redacted) Director of Environment & Forestry  
<director.enfor@gov.scot>; (Redacted) Minister for Environment and Land Reform <MinisterELR@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <CabSecRAI@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport <CabSecNetZET@gov.scot>  
**cc:** (Redacted)

First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>;  
DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox <Directormarinescotland@gov.scot>; (Redacted)

**Subject:** RE: For clearance - holding line on SEPA CEO

(Redacted)

Ms McAllan would prefer for the wording to be 'former chief exec' rather than referring to Terry by name please.

Thanks

(Redacted)

Tenants' Rights – Patrick Harvie

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | Tel: 0131 244 9412 | Mob: 07585 985751 | Email: [MinisterZCBATTR@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterZCBATTR@gov.scot)

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.

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**From:** (Redacted)

**Sent:** 21 January 2022 12:31

**To:** Director of Environment & Forestry <[director.enfor@gov.scot](mailto:director.enfor@gov.scot)>; (Redacted)

Minister for Environment and Land Reform <[MinisterELR@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterELR@gov.scot)>;

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <[CabSecRAI@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecRAI@gov.scot)>; Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport <[CabSecNetZET@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecNetZET@gov.scot)>

**cc:** (Redacted)

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

DG Net Zero <[DGNetZero@gov.scot](mailto:DGNetZero@gov.scot)>; Director Propriety and Ethics

<[DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot](mailto:DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot)>; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox

<[Directormarinescotland@gov.scot](mailto:Directormarinescotland@gov.scot)>; (Redacted)

**Subject:** RE: For clearance - holding line on SEPA CEO

Thanks Kevin

(Redacted)

Special Advisor to the First Minister

Rural Affairs, Islands and Transport

(Redacted)

Please continue to follow the public health guidance on coronavirus at

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

Scottish Government

St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

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).

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**From:** Director of Environment & Forestry <[director.enfor@gov.scot](mailto:director.enfor@gov.scot)>

**Sent:** 21 January 2022 12:29

**To:** (Redacted)

Minister for Environment and Land Reform

<[MinisterELR@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterELR@gov.scot)>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands <[CabSecRAI@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecRAI@gov.scot)>;

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport <[CabSecNetZET@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecNetZET@gov.scot)>

**cc:** (Redacted)

(Redacted)

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

DG Net Zero <[DGNetZero@gov.scot](mailto:DGNetZero@gov.scot)>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<[DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot](mailto:DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot)>; Director of Marine Scotland Mailbox  
<[Directormarinescotland@gov.scot](mailto:Directormarinescotland@gov.scot)>; (Redacted)

**Subject:** RE: For clearance - holding line on SEPA CEO

Copying in Ms Gougeon for aquaculture interests and sighting Mr Mathieson's office on the latest line below.

Adding (Redacted) and other relevant Spads.

Kevin

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**From:** (Redacted) >

**Sent:** 21 January 2022 11:57

**To:** Minister for Environment and Land Reform <[MinisterELR@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterELR@gov.scot)>

**cc:** (Redacted)

Director of Environment & Forestry <[director.enfor@gov.scot](mailto:director.enfor@gov.scot)>;

(Redacted)

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

**Subject:** For clearance - holding line on SEPA CEO

PO Minister for Environment and Land Reform,

(Copying FMPO for awareness)

Further to this morning's meeting, please find below a reactive line on the resignation of the SEPA CEO for clearance.

This line has been agreed by comms, policy and SpAds – grateful if you can confirm the Minister is content.

SEPA will be issuing a statement to media at 12:30. The text of their media release is copied below for information.

The SEPA comms plan – including Q&A – is also attached.

Comms and policy will work on further Q&A to cover SG interests.

Best,

(Redacted)

## **REACTIVE LINE – for clearance**

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"We are aware of the resignation of the former Chief Executive and will be

supporting the SEPA board in their process to recruit a new Chief Executive. We continue to work closely with SEPA on their ongoing work to protect Scotland's environment.

"It would be inappropriate to comment further on SEPA's internal staffing matters."

## Background

The SEPA Chief Executive reports to the SEPA board.

## **SEPA LINE – for awareness**

### **Scottish Environment Protection Agency : Leadership Arrangements**

On Friday, 21st January 2022, Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position.

Mr. Downes said:

"Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further."

Mr. Downes confirmed that recruitment for a new Chief Executive would shortly commence and in the interim, Chief Officer, Jo Green would be Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.

(Redacted) | **Communications: News (Net Zero and Energy)**

Senior Media Manager

Scottish Government, St Andrew's House

(Redacted)

HANDLING PLAN:	
PROJECT LEAD:	Jo Green
PLAN OWNER:	(Redacted)
VERSION:	20.01.22 V2.1

RESPONSIBLE:	ACCOUNTABLE:
(Redacted)	Jo Green
CONSULTED:	INFORMED:
Agency Board Agency Management Team Scottish Government	Senior Leadership Team All Managers All Staff Unison

KEY DATES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021</b>              12:00 Hrs : Pre-arranged call with SEPA Unison (JG)                       12:15 Hrs : Pre-arranged call TAH Direct Reports (JG)                       12:30 Hrs : Pre-arranged call with Executive Admin Team – (Redacted)                       12:40 Hrs : Chairman email to all staff (MG)                       12:45 Hrs : External communication to media and stakeholders (MG)                       13:30 Hrs : Chairman, Acting CX, Corporate Solicitor, Head of Communications, Internal Communications Manager Preparation Call                       14:00 Hrs : Strategic leaders and managers (RK)                       14:45 Hrs : All staff call (MS Teams) (RK)         </li> </ul>

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)

SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
 Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
 SEPA  
 (Redacted)

**SITUATION OVERVIEW:**

- **2021**  
Conduct allegations by Terry A'Hearn raised with Chairman Bob Downes.
- **Thursday, 6th January**  
Chairman Bob Downes and (Redacted) Head of HR, meet Terry A'Hearn regarding the allegations. Terry A'Hearn enters a period of paid leave to allow a review of the allegations.
- **Thursday, 6th January**  
Chairman Bob Downes asks Chief Officer, Jo Green to assume responsibilities as Acting Chief Executive whilst Terry A'Hearn on leave.
- **Friday, 7th January**  
Chief Officer, Jo Green communicates to organisation that she will assume responsibilities as Acting Chief Executive whilst Terry A'Hearn on leave.
- **Wednesday, 19th January**  
Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn resigns.
- **Thursday, 20th January**  
Chairman Bob Downes briefs SEPA Agency Board, Agency Management Team and Scottish Government.
- **Friday, 21st January**  
Chairman Bob Downes updates organisation, confirming that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further. Chief Officer, Jo Green will continue to assume responsibilities as Acting Chief Executive pending recruitment for a new Chief Executive.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

**COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES:**

- Be clear on events and next steps with our people and partners.
- Be clear that we take conduct allegations very seriously indeed.
- Be clear that SEPA has fair, open and accessible channels to raise concerns.
- Be clear that we'll support our people across this period.
- Be clear that whilst our leadership arrangements are changing, our focus is not.

**AUDIENCES:**

- Internal
  - Agency Board
  - Agency Management Team
  - Senior Leadership Team
  - All Managers
  
  - Directly Impacted Teams (Direct reports)
  - All staff
- Scottish Government
  - First Minister's Office
  - Cabinet Secretary and Ministers
  - Special Advisors
  - SG Sponsor Unit

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

- SG Net Zero Communications
- Scottish Parliament
  - Opposition Spokespeople
  - Committee Chairs and Deputies
  - Committee Clerks
- Scottish Public Sector
  - SG 'Net Zero' Partners
  - Other SG Public Bodies as appropriate.
- Scottish Business
  - IoD Scotland
  - CBI Scotland
  - Scottish Council Development of Industry (SCDI)
  - Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
  - Trade Associations
  - SGA Partners
- NGOs / Third Sector
  - Environmental Standards Scotland
  - Scottish Environment Link
  - Friends of the Earth Scotland
  - WWF Scotland
  - Scottish Wildlife Trust
  - Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- Media

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)

Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)



- SEPA Journalist Contact List
- Scottish Nationals and Regionals

**KEY LINES:**

- Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn had stepped down and left his position.
- SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed.
- In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.
- Recruitment for a new Chief Executive will shortly commence.
- Jo Green will continue as Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.
- Whilst today SEPA's leadership arrangements are changing, its focus is not.

**DEPENDENCIES:**

- Briefing to AMT and Agency Board.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

<b>ACTIVITY PLAN:</b>					
<b>DATE</b>	<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY / CHANNEL</b>	<b>KEY MESSAGES</b>	<b>COMMS LEAD</b>	<b>BUSINESS OWNER / APPROVAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 12:00 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	Unison Pre-Arranged Call	Call with Acting Chief Executive		(Redacted)	Jo Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 12:15 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	Terry A'Hearn's Direct Reports Pre-Arranged Call	Call with Acting Chief Executive		(Redacted)	Jo Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 12:30 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	Executive Admin Team Pre-Arranged Call	Call with Acting Chief Executive to confirm response arrangements		(Redacted)	Jo Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 12:40 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	All Staff	Chairman email to all staff		(Redacted)	Bob Downes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 12:45 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	External Stakeholders	External communication to media and stakeholders		(Redacted)	Downes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st JANUARY 2021 14:00 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	Strategic leaders and managers	Strategic leaders and managers (MS Teams)		(Redacted)	Bob Downes

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)

Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FRIDAY, 21st</b> <b>JANUARY 2021</b> <b>14:45 Hrs</b></li> </ul>	All Staff	All staff call (MS Teams)	(Redacted)	Bob Downes
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**INTERNAL MESSAGE:**

Hello [Name]

**Chief Executive Officer**

On Friday, 7th January, Chief Officer, Jo Green advised that she was assuming responsibilities of Acting Chief Executive.

Today I want to update you and advise that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.

Recruitment for a new Chief Executive will shortly commence and in the interim, I have asked Jo Green to continue as Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.

Whilst our CEO arrangements are changing our focus is not. Our focus will remain on delivering our flooding and regulatory services, on our staff and on the essential development work that is required to recover from the cyber attack.

Over the coming weeks and months you'll hear more about our plans, and on opportunities to help shape our focus.

Later this afternoon, Jo Green and I will talk directly with you about today's announcement and answer your questions on next steps.

Whilst I know some colleagues will be unavailable, those who are can join the sessions at:

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

- **Strategic leaders and managers**  
2pm, Friday 21st January : MS Teams
- **All staff**  
2:45pm, Friday 21st January : MS Teams

A reminder that we have various sources of support in place regarding any concerns about conduct within SEPA. You can discuss these with your line manager, Head of Function or HR. You can also contact Unison or the Employee Assistance Programme. Details are below.

Thank you again and I look forward to speaking with you.

**Bob Downes,**  
Chairman, SEPA

#### **UNISON**

The SEPA UNISON branch are there to support members and can be contacted via [www.sepaunison.org](http://www.sepaunison.org)

#### **Validium Employee Assistance Programme**

SEPA's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), provided to us by Validium, operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

They are there to help with personal counselling as well as advice on a wide range of family, work, financial and emotional issues. The telephone number is **0800 358 4858**.

You can also access support online at: [www.validium.com](http://www.validium.com)

You can sign into vClub using (Redacted)

You'll then be prompted to create your own password for future use when accessing the services available online.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)

Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)  
(Redacted)

**EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:**

- **Scottish Environment Protection Agency : Leadership Arrangements**

- On Friday, 21st January 2022, Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position.

Mr. Downes said:

“Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.”

Mr. Downes confirmed that recruitment for a new Chief Executive would shortly commence and in the interim, Chief Officer, Jo Green would be Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.

**TALKING POINTS FOR STAFF:**

- **Scottish Environment Protection Agency : Leadership**

- On Friday, 21st January 2022, Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.

- Mr. Downes confirmed that recruitment for a new Chief Executive would shortly commence and in the interim, Chief Officer, Jo Green would be Acting Chief Executive, supported by SEPA's Agency Management Team.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

- Whilst our leadership arrangements are changing, our focus is not.
- SEPA's important work continues, supported by AMT and 1,200 staff.
- Unless notified, contact points for partners and customers will remain unchanged.
- We're currently working through Terry's diary commitments and correspondence to ensure these are covered.
- Queries regarding Terry's diary or commitments should be emailed to [ceo@sepa.org.uk](mailto:ceo@sepa.org.uk), with broader queries referred to your normal SEPA contact.

**EXECUTIVE ADMIN RESPONSE:**

Dear [Name]

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency**

Thank you for your email to [name] / regarding [name].

On Friday, 21st January 2022, Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect aonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.

We're currently working through Terry's diary commitments and correspondence to ensure these are covered.

I've passed your email to [name / team] and have asked that they respond directly.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

Your sincerely,

[Name]

[Team]

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

**STAFF CALL : TALKING POINTS:**

- Welcome staff to the call.
- Thank staff for their time and apologise for the short notice.
- Outline purpose of the call to provide an update on organisational leadership, next steps and an opportunity to briefly ask questions.
- Outline who is on the call : Bob Downes, Jo Green, members of AMT, Senior Leaders and colleagues from Unison.
- Explain that in addition to updating all staff today via email, SEPA has issued an external communication on leadership arrangements.
- Outline leadership arrangements.
- Outline continued organisational focus.
- Recognise how difficult the last few years have been for staff and the impact on our people - thanking them on behalf of yourself, our board, Jo and Agency Management Team.
- Explain that you'll invite Jo Green to say a few words on next steps before together you, Jo and AMT are happy to take questions.
- Explain that whilst you're happy to take questions on the organisation, it's recovery, focus and next steps, in order to protect anonymity, you're not able to take questions or comments on Terry or his decision to stand down.
- Jo to echo Bob's thanks for people joining.
- Recognise that different people will have different reactions to today's news.
- Important to recognise that and be respectful and supportive to colleagues.

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)

Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)

Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

- Echo Bob in recognising how hard that has been and thank people - vary genuinely - for their focus on their own wellbeing, on supporting colleagues and the organisation.
- Whilst our CEO arrangements are changing our focus is not. Our focus will remain on delivering our flooding and regulatory services, on our staff and on the essential development work that is required to recover from the cyber attack.
- Recognise we've achieved a lot - more than most in our situation, but that we've got a lot to do and fix to make our work easier.
- Explain initial focus of your work and that of AMT.
- Explain that over the coming weeks and months you'll hear more about our plans, and on opportunities to help shape our focus.
  
- Ask for patience, explaining the importance of not speculating.
- Talking points will be available to all staff on the intranet after this call.
  
- Explain that for unless notified, partner and customer contact points for will remain unchanged.
- We're currently working through Terry's diary commitments and correspondence to ensure these are covered.
- Queries regarding Terry's diary or commitments should be emailed to [ceo@sepa.org.uk](mailto:ceo@sepa.org.uk), with broader queries referred to your normal SEPA contact.
- Explain that where colleagues had issues sat with Terry, they should speak to their relevant AMT member.
  
- Lastly, recognise that some people have asked about contacting Terry.
- Confirm that Terry has stood down and left the organisation. There could be external interest around this situation.
- Staff are reminded that all communications relating to SEPA business including communications on SEPA devices are subject to Access to Information legislation.
  
- Jo to open questions, reminding people what can and can't be discussed.
- Questions
  
- Thank colleagues for their time.

**OUR SPECIFIC ASK OF MANAGERS:**

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)



- We've worked hard today to ensure that as many of our colleagues as possible get to hear about this announcement this afternoon.
- We recognise however that some colleagues don't work a Friday, will be on leave, special leave or maternity/paternity leave.
- Use your judgement regarding contacting those on leave.
- Speak to colleagues directly. Don't forward emails outwith the organisation.
  
- Communicate today's announcement.
- Be clear that whilst our CEO arrangements are changing our focus is not.
- Our focus will remain on delivering our flooding and regulatory services, on our staff and on the essential development work that is required to recover from the cyber attack.
- Recognise we've achieved a lot - more than most in our situation, but that we've got a lot to do and fix to make our work easier.
- Explain that over the coming weeks and months will say more about our plans, and on opportunities to help shape our focus. You'll keep people informed as appropriate.
  
- Explain that for unless notified, partner and customer contact points for will remain unchanged.
  
- Explain talking points will be available to all staff on the intranet.
  
- We're currently working through Terry's diary commitments and correspondence to ensure these are covered.
- Queries regarding Terry's diary or commitments should be emailed to [ceo@sepa.org.uk](mailto:ceo@sepa.org.uk), with broader queries referred to your normal SEPA contact.
- Explain that where colleagues had issues sat with Terry, they should speak to their relevant AMT member.
  
- Recognise that different people will have different reactions to today's news.
- Thank colleagues for their time.

**SOCIAL CONTENT:**

- One social media post only:

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

- Bob Downes, Chairman of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, confirmed that following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn has stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency.  
Find out more at [link].

#### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

- **Q. When did TAH resign?**  
Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn resigned on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- **Q. Was TAH asked to resign?**  
No. Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency.
- **When did his employment with SEPA end?**  
Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency. His employment ended on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- **Q. What is the notice period of a SEPA CEO?**  
The notice period of a SEPA CEO is three-months.
- **Q. Will the notice period be followed in this instance?**  
No. Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency. His employment ended on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- **Q. Was his resignation subject to any financial settlement or compensation?**  
No payment in lieu of notice was or will be paid. There was no financial settlement or compensation.
- **Q. Was TAH subject to any complaint, grievance, investigation, or disciplinary process?**

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
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(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
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(Redacted)

Yes. Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency. SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes conduct allegations very seriously indeed. In order to protect anonymity, SEPA is unable to comment further.

- **Q. Has SEPA contacted or referred TAH to any investigative, regulatory or law enforcement agencies?**  
No.

- **Q. Does SEPA have a culture of bullying and harassment?**  
SEPA has a clear Code of Conduct and takes all conduct allegations very seriously indeed. SEPA has fair, open and accessible channels to raise concerns.

- **Q. SEPA is subject to a Section 22 Order. Does SEPA have a problem with financial management?**  
No. Following a serious and significant cyber-attack last Christmas Eve by international serious and organised criminals, in line with our organisational recovery strategy, SEPA has approved and submitted audited accounts for publication. Qualified accounts and a Section 22 report outlining the circumstances of the crime, the organisation's response, recovery and financial impact will be laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Auditor General in early 2022.

- **Q. Can colleagues contact Terry?**  
Yes. Following conduct allegations, Terry A'Hearn stepped down and left his position as Chief Executive of the agency. There could be external interest around this situation. Staff are reminded that all communications relating to SEPA business including communications on SEPA devices are subject to Access to Information legislation.

#### EVALUATION:

- Monitor and respond (where appropriate) to media, political or stakeholder sentiment or enquiries.

#### OUTSTANDING:

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

**LINKS TO ASSETS:**

DRAFT

For further information, contact:  
(Redacted)  
Head of Communications  
SEPA  
(Redacted)

(Redacted)  
Lead Manager: Media & Public Affairs  
SEPA  
(Redacted)