

**Doc 1:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 23 September 2025 21:54  
**To:** Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray  
<Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers  
<Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce  
<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

All  
To confirm the **response to Douglas Ross MSP** has now issued.  
Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

**Private Secretary**  
**Office of the First Minister**  
**Mobile:** [REDACTED]

**From:** Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 23 September 2025 14:08  
**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster  
<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Ross  
Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray  
<Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers  
<Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce  
<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

[REDACTED]



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

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 13:27

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Hi Katie,

As discussed, can you please add this text to FM template? I agree that the FM should write to Mr Ross to acknowledge his letter and that he considers the matter closed given Mr Hepburn's resignation. Text as follows:

*Thank you for your letter of 19th September raising an issue under the Ministerial Code about the behaviour of Jamie Hepburn MSP, then Minister for Parliamentary Business. As you know, Mr Hepburn has reflected on his behaviour and took full responsibility for his conduct, resigning on Friday. His letter of resignation is in the public domain, as is my reply.*

*I also understand that Mr Hepburn has written personally to you to apologise and has made an apology for his behaviour directly to the Presiding Officer.*

*I think you would agree that these actions sufficiently discharge the matters raised in your correspondence and I therefore consider this matter closed.*

Grateful if we can be sent a copy of the reply for records/

Thanks,

[REDACTED] | Propriety and Ethics Team

1W.10, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 12:22

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>



We have now received a letter from Mr Ross [REDACTED]

Many thanks,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Private Secretary**  
**Office of the First Minister**  
**Mobile:** [REDACTED]

Douglas Ross MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Highlands and Islands Region  
The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP  
douglas.ross.msp@parliament.scot  
0131 348 6161  
facebook douglasross4moray x-twitter @douglas4moray instagram /douglas.ross.mp

John Swinney  
First Minister of Scotland  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

19th September 2025

Dear First Minister,

Complaint under the Ministerial Code – Conduct of Jamie Hepburn MSP

I am writing to raise a formal complaint regarding the conduct of Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, during proceedings in the Scottish Parliament Chamber on 17 September 2025 and ask that you refer this matter to the Independent Advisers on the Scottish Ministerial Code.

As you are now aware, Mr Hepburn engaged in behaviour towards me which included physically grabbing me, raising his voice and using foul and abusive language and there are witnesses to this incident.

Mr Hepburn has now given an interview where he has not denied key aspects of my account and has indeed corroborated crucial facts.

I believe his conduct is wholly inconsistent with the standards of behaviour required under the Scottish Ministerial Code, specifically:

- Paragraph 1.1: The general principle that Ministers “are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of propriety.”

- Paragraph 1.4: The Seven Principles of Public Life, in particular Leadership, which requires Ministers to “treat others with respect” and challenge poor behaviour rather than engage in it.
- Paragraph 1.5, which states that Ministers must be professional in all their dealings, treating colleagues with consideration and respect. The same paragraph explicitly confirms that “Harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminating behaviour, wherever it takes place, is not consistent with the Ministerial Code and will not be tolerated.”
- Paragraph 1.8: The requirement for Ministers to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament, which prohibits bullying, harassment, or other inappropriate behaviour.

Aggressively grabbing a fellow MSP, raising one’s voice in anger, and using foul and abusive language falls well below the standards set out in these provisions. This amounts to bullying behaviour and, in my view, is a clear breach of the Ministerial Code. I fear for other colleagues who may be exposed to this behaviour if Mr Hepburn continues in his position of power within your government.

I therefore request that you, as First Minister, take immediate steps to investigate this incident and determine whether Mr Hepburn has breached the Ministerial Code. Given the seriousness of the behaviour, the public nature of the incident, Mr Hepburn’s lack of denial of key aspects of the incident and the Ministerial Code’s zero tolerance policy, I believe swift and transparent action is required to uphold confidence in the standards expected of Ministers.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,  
DOUGLAS ROSS MS

**From:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 11:32

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen

<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

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

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Adding Andy

H



Cc: Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell  
<Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Morning [REDACTED]

Acknowledging that this is being picked up. My understanding is that nothing has been received from Mr Ross.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Propriety and Ethics Team  
1W.10, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

Please note, I am currently working from home and can be contacted via MS Teams

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 08:35

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics

<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell  
<Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

[REDACTED]

Thanks

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Friday, September 19, 2025 8:15:26 AM

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen  
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Adding [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> on behalf of First Minister  
<FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Friday, September 19, 2025 8:07:13 AM

**To:** Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen  
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Good morning

[REDACTED]

Grateful for confirmation that this has been picked up.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

**Doc 2:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Permanent Secretary

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 17:46

**To:** Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: MINISTERIAL DEPARTURE LETTER FOR PERM SEC SIGNATURE AND ISSUE

Thanks for this [REDACTED]. Just to confirm that **this letter issued this evening** and I have attached a copy for your records.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Head of Permanent Secretary office

1N.07 | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | T: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretariat Inbox

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 15:40

**To:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>

**Subject:** MINISTERIAL DEPARTURE LETTER FOR PERM SEC SIGNATURE AND ISSUE

**Importance:** High

PS/Perm Sec

**MINISTERIAL DEPARTURE LETTER**

Please see attached a draft letter for Perm Sec to send to Jamie Hepburn MSP on his departure from Government. The terms of the draft have been developed in liaison with Propriety and Ethics colleagues and reflects the current position with regards to ACOBA. Apologies for this not being offered on Perm Sec headed paper – I could not locate the template.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Cabinet Secretariat

**Doc 3**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 22 September 2025 12:18

**To:** PQ/FMQ Team <pq/fmqteam@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Propriety and Ethics team mailbox <PandETeam@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Covid inquiries information <covidinquiriesinformation@gov.scot>; Eilidh Mclaughlin <Eilidh.Mclaughlin@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications Deputy First Minister, Economy and Gaelic <DFMEG@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Linda Pooley <Linda.Pooley@gov.scot>; Claire Tynte-irvine <Claire.Tynte-irvine@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Dominic Munro <Dominic.Munro@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; IPED : Freedom of Information Unit <DLCEABEFDFIU@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Judith Mackinnon <Judith.Mackinnon@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@transport.gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Anna Donald <Anna.Donald@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Police Division Hub Mailbox <police\_division\_hub\_mailbox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; PQ/FMQ Team <pq/fmqteam@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Denise Swanson <Denise.Swanson@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: [REDACTED] - DG Corporate - Due 11 am Monday 22nd September

[REDACTED]

Apologies for missing the 11am deadline. [REDACTED]

Thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Head of FOI Policy

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government | [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

20 Sept: Coverage of the resignation of Mr Hepburn includes Scottish Sun article regarding calls by Murdo Fraser MSP for him to forgo his resettlement payment and comments by Monica Lennon MSP regarding the tone of debate in the Parliament.

**RESETTLEMENT PAYMENT FOR MR HEPBURN**

Ministerial and MSP salaries are set and paid by the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government has no role in this.

Salaries are agreed by the whole Parliament in line with proposals put forward by the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body.

**[out of scope]**

**Doc 4:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 16:18

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Propriety and Ethics team mailbox <PandETeam@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For FM clearance - BBC query - MSP conduct in Holyrood

Thanks [REDACTED] – I have issued this to both BBC journalists who approached us.

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 16:09

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Propriety and Ethics team mailbox <PandETeam@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For FM clearance - BBC query - MSP conduct in Holyrood

Good afternoon,

The First Minister is content.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 15:41

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <Emily.Mackintosh@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics

<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].@gov.scot>; Propriety and Ethics team mailbox <PandETeam@gov.scot>; Helen Webster  
<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; [REDACTED].@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED].@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Communications  
Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>

**Subject:** For FM clearance - BBC query - MSP conduct in Holyrood

Good afternoon FMPO,

BBC Radio Scotland has approached us in relation to comments made by Monica Lennon this morning on GMS (transcript attached) about politicians' conduct in the Scottish Parliament and how the tone in debates needs to be improve.

This follows Mr Hepburn's resignation – full query below and [online coverage](#).

SpAd, Comms, Cabinet & Parliament division colleagues and DG Corporate have agreed the following response.

I'd be grateful if you could confirm **as soon as possible** whether the First Minister is content, please?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

## **RESPONSE**

### **A Scottish Government spokesperson said:**

“Scottish Ministers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of propriety.”

### **Background**

Matters regarding MSP concerns on safety at work are a matter for the Scottish Parliament.

## **QUERY**

As mentioned, Monica Lennon was on Good Morning Scotland where she spoke about how politicians need to set a better tone in debates following Jamie Hepburn's resignation.

Monica said that Scottish Government ministers should be setting the highest example and that the quality of discourse has deteriorated in recent years (with politicians punching down rather than up).

She says this is a cross-party issue, but it's really important that the Scottish Parliament is a safe place to work.

Does the Scottish Government wish to respond to these safety concerns?

[REDACTED]

Media Manager – Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

The Scottish Government

m: [REDACTED]

Doc 5:

**From:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 13:35

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Subject:** RE: For input - Sunday Mail query - golden goodbyes for former Ministers

Thanks [REDACTED]

Happy with that.

Helen

**Helen Webster (she/her)** | Deputy Director for Cabinet, Parliament and Governance & Secretary of Commissions | Directorate for Communications and Ministerial Support | Scottish Government

E: [Helen.Webster@gov.scot](mailto:Helen.Webster@gov.scot) | Mob: 07477 057757

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 12:21

**To:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Subject:** For input - Sunday Mail query - golden goodbyes for former Ministers

Good morning Helen,

The Sunday Mail has approached us off the back of [this Sun article](#) which references calls for Jamie Hepburn to refuse the payment he will receive as Minister leaving his role.

The journalist asks if the Scottish Government wishes to comment. I've copied below the background information we usually issue to journalists.

Could you please confirm you are content before I seek SpAd views on reissuing?

Many thanks,  
[REDACTED]

## RESPONSE

### For information:

Ministerial and MSP salaries are set and paid by the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government has no role in this. Salaries are agreed by the whole Parliament in line with proposals put forward by the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body.

## QUERY

One more query – it's just off the back of this by our old friends at the Sun  
- <https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/15363373/snp-jamie-hepburn-golden-goodbye-politics-gullgate/>

Does the govt have a comment on if Jamie Hepburn will be allowed to take his £9k 'golden goodbye' after quitting as a minister?

[REDACTED]

Media Manager – Constitution, External Affairs and Culture  
The Scottish Government

m: [REDACTED]

**Doc 6:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 10:04

**To:** Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin

McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; David Hutchison

<David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce

<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster

<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister

<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcoperative@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

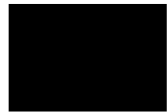
**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

FM PO, SPADS, Officials

For awareness

Please find the transcript of Ms Lennon and Mr Ross from this morning's BBC Radio Scotland GMS interview now attached.

Many thanks,



Senior Media Manager | News: Deputy First Minister & Economy

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

m: [REDACTED]

Programme(s)	<b>BBC Radio Scotland Good Morning Scotland</b>
Date & time	<b>Saturday 20 September 2025 08.06</b>
Subject/Interviewee	<b>Interview - Douglass Ross and Monica Lennon</b>
Duration	<b>9.25</b>

**Presenter:** Let's take a look through the front pages of the papers this morning, many of them featuring the resignation of the government minister Jamie Hepburn. The Scottish Daily Express says, "SNP minister quits over 'gullgate' rammy at Holyrood". The Sun. "Gullgate gnat flocks off".

Well, the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth MSP quit yesterday afternoon after the former Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross accused him of physically grabbing him, raising his voice, and using foul and abusive language inside the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday. Douglas Ross is with us now. Morning.

**Douglas Ross MSP, Scottish Conservatives, Leader:** Good morning, Lucy.

**P:** Can you start by just talking us through the incident on Wednesday? What happened?

**DR:** We did have a discussion and debate in Parliament about a seagull summit which is being held on Tuesday, up in Inverness. It's being held at Nature's Scots headquarters near the government quango, and it's being closed off to the vast majority of the public, the politicians, and the press. I felt that was wrong, and it was against the commitment made by the Government in June that they would have an open public meeting. I tried to get a number of questions this week in Parliament that weren't selected, so there is a procedure where any member can speak in the business motion, and I took that opportunity. I know it's not used very often, but this is... I know it's easy for some people to maybe make light of gulls and debates about gulls, but it is having a severe impact up in Moray, where I live, across the Highlands, particularly Inverness and Nairn. Fergus Ewing and I have been doing a lot of work to raise this issue, and it is causing a real concern for people who are attacked by these gulls. Some people are hospitalised.

Anyway, we had the discussion, and I was leaving the chamber, probably about 20 minutes later, because there were votes or other things, and I was grabbed by Jamie Hepburn, and he started swearing in my face, and immediately, I thought it was a joke. I thought he couldn't possibly be this animated and angry about it, but it very quickly became apparent that he was, and he was getting angrier and angrier.

**P:** And what made you take the decision then to write to the First Minister about it?

**DR:** Well, because I raised this, first of all, in the immediate aftermath of the incident with the Chief Executive, David McGill, of the Parliament, and he was extremely helpful to me as an individual member and showed real concern, as has the Presiding Officer and other members of the parliamentary team. I raised it at First Minister's questions, hoping for the First Minister to say and do something about it. I felt by that stage on Thursday afternoon, the facts were very clear.

Subsequently, the Minister accepted some of what I'd said. He said he put his hand on me. I think there are witnesses that have proven that to be a lot more severe than that, and he admitted using inappropriate language. Therefore, he had accepted he breached the ministerial code, but John Swinney did nothing about it. The SNP were making it clear throughout Thursday evening that the Minister would survive. He wouldn't resign, and he wouldn't be sacked. So, by Friday morning, I felt the route option open to me was to ask John Swinney to launch an inquiry into his minister and refer this matter to a group called the Independent Advisors on the Ministerial Code. A few hours after that, he'd gone, which I think is an indication that they knew he would be found guilty.

**P:** Have you heard from Jamie Hepburn?

**DR:** I have. I think he resigned, maybe at quarter to four yesterday afternoon. I was actually out in my back garden playing football with my two boys, and my phone started to go into a bit of a meltdown. Later on in the afternoon, I noticed I had a personal email from Jamie Hepburn. I won't tell you everything that's in it, but it was a very personal, reflective, and a full apology. I do appreciate that, and I give credit to Jamie Hepburn for reaching out in that way, particularly at a difficult time. He'd just resigned from Government for the last 11 years. He served as a minister, so it couldn't have been easy for him, and I did appreciate him writing to me in that way.

**P:** And you're known for relishing in what can sometimes be the fiery nature of politics, particularly, I'm thinking about your exchanges when Nicola Sturgeon was First Minister and when you were the opposition leader. And in fact, at one stage, you were asked to leave the

chamber for heckling. I wonder, have there been times over the years where you've reflected on your own behaviour?

**DR:** I think we all do, but there's a difference between robust debate and physically grabbing someone and using language which is not appropriate in any workplace in any part of the country. And that was the difference here. I enjoy a robust debate, be it in the chamber, be it in committee, be it having a discussion in public meetings in Moray or across the Highlands and Islands. That's what politics is about. It's about sometimes disagreeing, but doing that in a way where you can at least respect each other.

But when you start to manhandle someone, when you start to be unable to control your own temper, that causes problems, as it has with Jamie Hepburn in this case.

**P:** Douglas Ross, thank you so much for your time this morning. We did ask to speak to Jamie Hepburn or a Scottish Government minister, and nobody was available.

Listening to that is the Labour MSP, Monica Lennon. Monica, good morning.

**Monica Lennon MSP:** Good morning.

**P:** Just to get your reaction, first of all, I guess to the incident and also to what you heard there from Douglas Ross.

**ML:** Thank you. Yes, it's been a shocking few days in Parliament, and it's right that Jamie Hepburn has resigned. It's right that he's apologised, and it's right that he's withdrawn from Government because everyone deserves a safe working environment, and Scottish ministers should be setting the highest example.

**P:** What is it like in the Chamber at Holyrood? We were just discussing there with Douglas Ross, and he says he enjoys robust debate. Do you think it sometimes spills over from that?

**ML:** Well, it's right that the Holyrood Chamber is a place for robust debate, but I think at times ministers and some MSPs have lost the ability to actively listen to one another. And the issue about ministers coming to Parliament to make statements, ministers being accountable, that's a real concern that members have. It's very difficult for backbench MSPs to have any influence over what issues are scrutinised in the parliamentary chamber, and members' debates are one of the ways that we can do that but they're few and far between for MSPs. And Government's got a tough job to do to balance all the interests, but people should be listening to each other, and when MSPs raise concerns in the chamber, the majority of the time it's on behalf of constituents.

So, I represent central Scotland and Jamie Hepburn's seat is within my area, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth and I think when you come back home to the community after a day in Parliament and people see these kinds of headlines and these kind of discussions on the radio, they just think to themselves "What is going on in that Parliament because you couldn't behave like that in any other workplace?" So, I think, for the Scottish Government, that there will have to be a lot of reflection on how we set the tone better because every week there has to be compromise and negotiation about parliamentary business and people need to feel safe but they'll also be listened to and if they can't get their own way that there's a good reason for that.

**P:** Is it getting worse? You've been an MSP for nearly 10 years.

**ML:** I think the culture both in the Scottish Parliament and our political discourse has deteriorated. I think there is a lot more anger. I think my first term in Parliament, when I was elected in 2016, it did feel like there was more cross-party working and a willingness for people to at least try and get on, but now it definitely feels more performative in the chamber. There's a lot of punching down, shouting people down. I think the Scottish Government has to set the highest example, but I think it's an issue for all parties. I wouldn't try and blame that on any one particular party, but I think for a situation where the Scottish Government's minister for parliamentary business, someone who has to work with everyone in Parliament, has resigned in these circumstances, I think that will cause a lot of upset and concern within the Scottish Government. It sounds like it's not the end of the matter.

**P:** And Monica, while we've got you here, I wanted to ask you about some of the pressure that's on the Prime Minister at the moment, on Keir Starmer. Certainly, at the start of the week, quite a lot of question marks hanging over his leadership and a lot of attention on the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham. I wonder if he, you think, would be a better candidate at the helm of Labour?

**ML:** Well, I think the transition from opposition to government is always difficult. Keir Starmer, as a Labour Prime Minister, has had a very tough inheritance from the Tories after 14 years of chaos and austerity. So, I want Keir Starmer to do well. I want the Labour government to do well. Have we got everything right? No, we haven't. But we've done a lot of good things, and that work needs to continue. Andy Burnham's a fantastic colleague, as are all of my colleagues, so whatever Andy chooses to do, he would have my support in the future.

**P:** A diplomatic answer, as always. Thank you so much. That's Labour MSP, Monica Lennon.

**Ends**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 08:58

**To:** Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

No bother Jack, transcript has been requested and will be shared once received- thanks!

[REDACTED] | **Media Manager | Communications Education |**

[REDACTED] | **Scottish Government |** [REDACTED]

**From:** Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 20 September 2025 08:42

**To:** [redacted]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Could we have a transcript of Mr Ross and Ms Lennon on GMS?

**Jack Middleton**

Special Adviser to the First Minister

jack.middleton@gov.scot

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 19:06  
**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Thanks [redacted], will let BBC know now- thanks!

[redacted] | **Media Manager | Communications Education |**

[redacted] | **Scottish Government |** [redacted]

**From:** [redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 18:53  
**To:** [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Good evening,

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 18:39  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Hello, again sorry to chase on this one, just again conscious GMS are waiting, grateful for the First Ministers views?

[REDACTED] | **Media Manager | Communications Education |**  
[REDACTED] | **Scottish Government |** [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 17:12  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Jennifer [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; DG Corporate <dgcorporate@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Looping in weekend duty Spad Jack, [REDACTED]

---

[REDACTED] | Deputy head of News, Scottish Government | [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 17:09  
**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; David Hutchison <David.Hutchison@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Communications First Minister <CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government <CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DG Corporate <[dgcorporate@gov.scot](mailto:dgcorporate@gov.scot)>

**Subject:** For consideration: BBC bids on Mr Hepburn

Good evening FMPO,

Copying Perm Sec for awareness.

Drivetime for this evening and GMS for tomorrow have bid for an SG Minister to respond to Mr Hepburn's resignation. Comms would recommend declining and pointing to the news release, subject to FM's agreement. Grateful for the FM's consideration.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

**News | Media Manager – Finance, Local Government and Corporate**  
The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

[REDACTED] | Portfolio Media inquiries: 0300 244 9027

**Doc 7:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@parliament.scot>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 16:30  
**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Pay and Pension Enquiries  
<PayandPensionEnquiries@Parliament.Scot>  
**Cc:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Resignation of Jamie Hepburn

Thanks for confirming [REDACTED]. We will action on payroll.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 16:26  
**To:** [REDACTED]@parliament.scot>; Pay and Pension Enquiries  
<PayandPensionEnquiries@Parliament.Scot>  
**Cc:** [Helen.Webster@gov.scot](mailto:Helen.Webster@gov.scot); [CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot](mailto:CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot)  
**Subject:** Resignation of Jamie Hepburn

Hi [REDACTED],

As you may have seen, Jamie Hepburn MSP resigned as Minister for Parliamentary Business today.

I am just writing to confirm that his final day in Ministerial office is today, for Ministerial pay purposes.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Head of Cabinet Business and Governance  
Cabinet Secretariat  
Scottish Government

[REDACTED]

**Doc 8:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 15:48  
**To:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Exchange between the First Minister and Mr Hepburn

You probably got direct

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 15:41  
**To:** DL Cabinet Secretaries <DLMPOPCABSEC@gov.scot>; DL Ministers <DLMPOPMIN@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Exchange between the First Minister and Mr Hepburn

Good afternoon,

Please see exchange of emails between the First Minister and Mr Hepburn today.

Best,



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

John Swinney MSP  
First Minister of Scotland

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear First Minister,

Over the course of yesterday evening and today I have been reflecting on the incident that has been widely reported in the media in the last two days and discussing it with my family. I have come to conclude that I want to offer my resignation as your Minister for Parliamentary Business.

I understand that that a complaint has been made to you with a suggestion that I be referred to the Independent Advisers on the Scottish Ministerial Code.

Irrespective of whether or not the Ministerial Code has been breached, even if there had been no complaint made, I believe I have not acted in accordance with my own personal code of practice. This decision is one that I feel is for the best in these circumstances and the one that for my own part feel is the appropriate course of action.

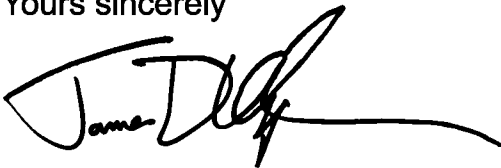
I hope it would be felt by most, and not least you, that in my personal and professional undertakings I have always tried to act courteously in interacting with colleagues, either of our own party or others. There is no denying that my interaction with Douglas Ross fell well short of that standard. Despite whatever annoyance I felt at that particular moment, there is a manner in which that might have been conveyed, or indeed shouldn't have been conveyed. That is not in utilising the language that I did. I hope it is recognised on your part and others that this behaviour was quite out of character on my part.

I do not want to cause any distraction for you or the Government, or indeed to that of the primary position of responsibility I have as the constituency representative for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. I believe my continued presence as one of your Ministers would do so. In such circumstances I believe it is best that I stand down with immediate effect.

With no sense of personal pity, having served continuously in Government for almost eleven years it is a source of regret that my tenure in Ministerial office comes to and end in this fashion. In the immediate period it will be the greater part of what is reported out of my time in office, but I hope it is felt that I have made a positive contribution across the various roles I have held serving in your government and that of your two predecessors. Others will of course be the judge of that.

I am grateful to you for the support you have shown me during my time as a Minister and you can be assured of my ongoing support for you and the Government in this critical period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Hepburn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Jamie Hepburn**  
**MSP for Cumbernauld & Kilsyth (SNP)**

Jamie Hepburn MSP  
Jamie.Hepburn.msp@parliament.scot

19 September 2025

Dear Jamie,

It is with much personal regret that I accept your letter of resignation as Minister for Parliamentary Business.

I am deeply grateful for your efforts on behalf of the Government, where you have always worked across Parliament in accommodating the requests and views of other parties over the matters that should command the time and attention of the chamber. I know there will be no one more frustrated than you, over this one slip in your normal approach of courtesy and respect to all.

I know that my predecessors also valued the contributions that you made in their

governments. Your work in delivering the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 while a Health Minister has made a real difference in the lives of carers, and the people they care for. While Business Minister you championed support for consumers and were instrumental in the establishment of Consumer Scotland.

As we progress toward independence, I appreciate the work that you carried out as Minister for Independence to make the case for a better future for our nation. And during the Covid pandemic, I recall our work together in supporting the business sector and your efforts to support the recovery in higher and further education during your time in the Education portfolio.

Your efforts as a Minister have benefited the people of Scotland in myriad walks of life. Despite your decision to step down, you will continue to play an important role in our Party and in public life, as well as continuing to be a vocal advocate for the people of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth.

You leave office with my warmest thanks and my appreciation for the constant support that you have given to me.

Yours for Scotland,  
JOHN SWINNEY MSP

**Doc 9:**

**From:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 12:37

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister

<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>;

Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Subject:** Re: SPAD views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various

Happy but do not progress for now please.

Regards

**Colin McAllister**

Chief of Staff

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Sent:** Friday, September 19, 2025 12:31:54 PM

**To:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister

<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>;

Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot

**Subject:** SPAD views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various

Correcting subject line

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 12:19

**To:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister

<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>;

Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]@gov.scot; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: for urgent views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various

Hi SpAds and Geoff for DG corporate,

Mr Ross has written to FM raising a complaint against Mr Hepburn under the Ministerial Code. Conservatives news release below and letter attached. A number of media outlets seek SG response.

Grateful for SpAd views of suggested line, agreed with officials.

Comms will seek clearance from FM and the Permanent Secretary.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“The First Minister’s office has received a complaint which will be considered in line with the processes set out in the Ministerial Code.

“It would be inappropriate to comment further.”

Background

The Ministerial Code.

### **Cons News Release**

**Please find attached a letter Douglas Ross has sent to First Minister John Swinney following the conduct of the minister for parliamentary business, Jamie Hepburn, towards him earlier this week.**

**Highlands and Islands MSP Douglas Ross said:** “Jamie Hepburn’s conduct towards me represents a clear breach of the Ministerial Code. John Swinney must investigate this incident and make a quick decision as to whether he agrees with me.

“The public deserve to have ministers in place that will uphold the standards expected of them. By any measure the SNP’s minister for parliamentary business did not do that earlier this week and he has accepted this.

“If he is allowed by the First Minister to remain in a position of power, then I am concerned what this might mean in future for colleagues who could be exposed to the behaviour I was subjected to.”

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 12:12

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster

<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray  
<Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>;  
Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: for urgent views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various

Thanks, [REDACTED]. And thanks, [REDACTED] for policy feedback. I'll send this to SpAds / DG corporate

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 12:08

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster  
<Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray  
<Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>;  
Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: for urgent views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various

With thanks, small suggested amend.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"The First Minister's office has received a complaint which will be considered in line with the processes set out in the Ministerial Code.

"It would be inappropriate to comment further."

Background

Link to Ministerial Code

---

[REDACTED] Deputy head of News, Scottish Government | [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 11:56

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Communications Finance and Local Government

<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>;

Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** for urgent views - media query - Ministerial Code complaint - various  
**Importance:** High

Hi all,

Mr Ross has written to FM raising a complaint against Mr Hepburn under the Ministerial Code. Conservatives news release below and letter attached. A number of media outlets seek SG response.

Suggested starter below. Grateful for urgent input, pls.

Happy to discuss. Pls widen copylist if others should be sighted.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“The First Minister has received a complaint which will be considered in line with the processes set out in the Ministerial Code.

“It would be inappropriate to comment further.”

Background

Link to Ministerial Code

### **Cons News Release**

**Please find attached a letter Douglas Ross has sent to First Minister John Swinney following the conduct of the minister for parliamentary business, Jamie Hepburn, towards him earlier this week.**

**Highlands and Islands MSP Douglas Ross said:** “Jamie Hepburn’s conduct towards me represents a clear breach of the Ministerial Code. John Swinney must investigate this incident and make a quick decision as to whether he agrees with me.

“The public deserve to have ministers in place that will uphold the standards expected of them. By any measure the SNP’s minister for parliamentary business did not do that earlier this week and he has accepted this.

“If he is allowed by the First Minister to remain in a position of power, then I am concerned what this might mean in future for colleagues who could be exposed to the behaviour I was subjected to.”

[REDACTED]

Senior Media Manager

News: Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government (including corporate queries)

**Doc 10:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 18 September 2025 20:53

**To:** Joe Griffin <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government  
<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant  
<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston  
<Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: FOR CLEARANCE - media requests for comment - allegations re Minister for  
Parliamentary Business - various

Thanks Joe

Issuing lines now.

Best wishes and thanks to all.

[REDACTED]  
**From:** Joe Griffin <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 18 September 2025 20:48

**To:** [REDACTED]; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government  
<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant

<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston  
<Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: FOR CLEARANCE - media requests for comment - allegations re Minister for  
Parliamentary Business - various

fine for me thanks.

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 18, 2025 8:46:47 PM

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary  
<PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government  
<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant  
<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston  
<Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; Joe Griffin <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024  
<MinisterPB@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: FOR CLEARANCE - media requests for comment - allegations re Minister for  
Parliamentary Business - various

Many thanks [REDACTED]

Grateful for PermSec clearance before issuing.

Best wishes  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 18 September 2025 20:38

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

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox  
<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government  
<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant  
<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston  
<Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; Joe Griffin <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024  
<MinisterPB@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: FOR CLEARANCE - media requests for comment - allegations re Minister for  
Parliamentary Business - various

[REDACTED]  
The FM has cleared.

Thanks  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 18, 2025 7:26:17 PM

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics  
<DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox

<CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; Communications Finance and Local Government  
<CommunicationsFinanceandLocalGovernment@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister  
<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>;  
[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Geoff Huggins <Geoff.Huggins@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]  
<[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Julie Grant  
<Julie.Grant@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern  
<Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Jack Middleton <Jack.Middleton@gov.scot>; Anna Kynaston  
<Anna.Kynaston@gov.scot>; Joe Griffin <Joe.Griffin@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024  
<MinisterPB@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FOR CLEARANCE - media requests for comment - allegations re Minister for Parliamentary Business - various

For clearance - FMPO and Permanent Secretary

CCing for awareness Minister/PO,

A number of media outlets have requested lines on SG's position following the allegations made against the Minister for Parliamentary Business at the conclusion of FMQs.

In addition, the Scottish Sun posed specific questions in full below.

As it stands, officials are not aware of any complaint under the ministerial code being raised with SG or FMPO.

Grateful for clearance of suggested line, agreed with policy and SpAds.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"Mr Hepburn has personally responded to these comments. Any allegation, if received, would be considered in due course."

### **Scottish Sun query**

- 1) Does the First Minister consider Jamie Hepburn's behaviour to be in line with Section 1.5 of the Ministerial Code?
- 2) Will the First Minister refer Mr Hepburn's alleged behaviour to the independent advisers on the Ministerial Code?
- 3) Have the independent advisers on the Ministerial Code notified the First Minister that they are minded to investigate Mr Hepburn's behaviour under their terms of reference?

[REDACTED]

Senior Media Manager

News: Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government (including corporate queries)

**Doc 11:**

**From:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 15:22  
**To:** John Swinney <John.Swinney@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Draft reply

Understood.

Regards

**Colin McAllister**

Chief of Staff

**From:** John Swinney  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 15:21  
**To:** Colin McAllister  
**Cc:** First Minister  
**Subject:** Re: Draft reply

Revised as below. This can now be issued to Mr Hepburn.

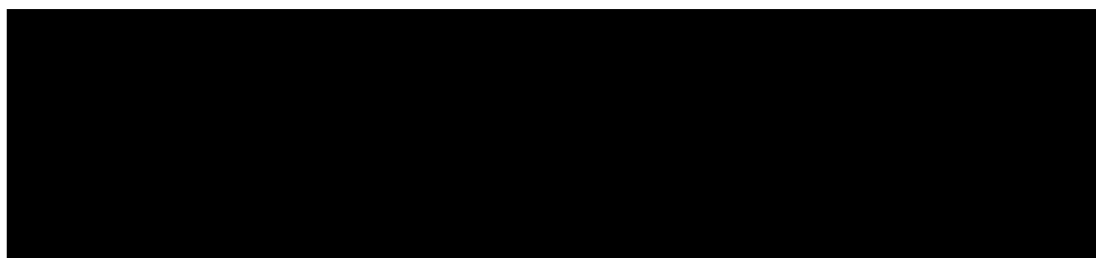
Can arrangements now be put in place to share this more widely. I would like the following to be advised with 5 minute intervals between each :

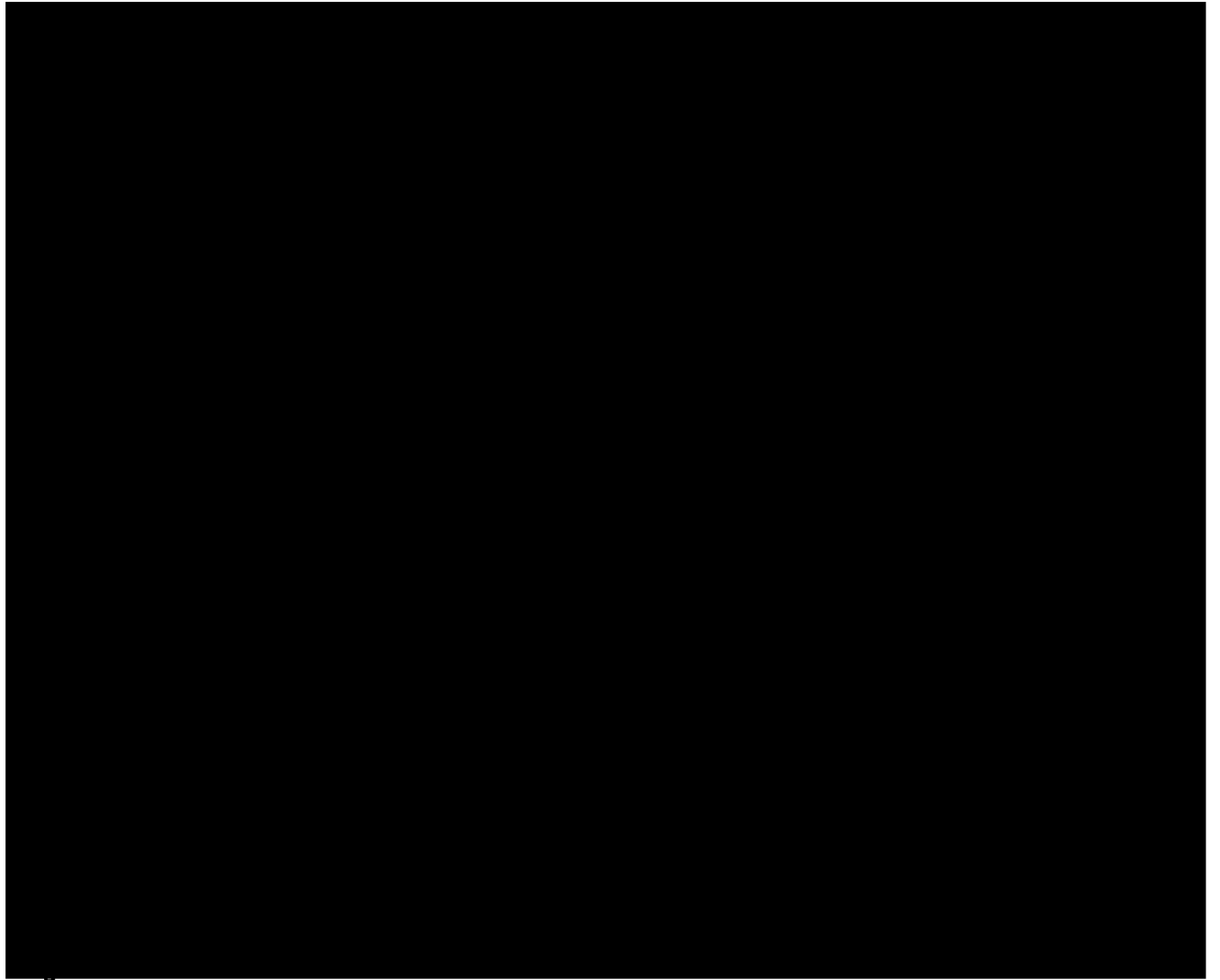
1. Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers,
2. SNP MSPs,
3. the media.

All must be completed by 5pm.

FM

**From:** Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 19, 2025 2:32 pm  
**To:** John Swinney <John.Swinney@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Draft reply





**Colin McAllister**

Chief of Staff

**Doc 12:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 09:31

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Notification of resignation to PO

That'll be all that is needed, I will pick up with Parliament again to confirm this has happened.

Thanks!

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

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 09:30

**To:** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 ; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox ; [REDACTED]

**Cc:** First Minister

**Subject:** RE: Notification of resignation to PO

[REDACTED] – I sent the attached to the PO yesterday. Is something further required?

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 09:27

**To:** Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Notification of resignation to PO

Hi folks,

You'll be aware that the PO needs to notify the resignation of Mr Hepburn to Parliament. They can only do this if a notification is received from SG which they have said they have not received. I know there was an occasion in the past when has issued from MinfPB, although I realise it might be better this time coming from FM?

Can you advise if this is being worked on please – the letter to the PO just needs to note that Jamie Hepburn MSP has now resigned, and that Graeme Dey is now Minister. The same letter could also advise of Mr Macpherson coming in.

Parliament would be grateful for this asap so that they can add the resignation to the business bulletin.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary to the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans – Graeme Dey MSP

[REDACTED]

**Doc 13:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 13:36

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Ross has cleared

**From:** Ross Ingebrigtsen

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 13:32

**To:** First Minister ; [REDACTED] ; Helen Webster ; Director Propriety and Ethics

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary ; [REDACTED] ; Ashleigh Gray ; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox ; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ; Colin McAllister ; Sean McGivern ; Jeanette Campbell ; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ; Michael Chalmers ; [REDACTED] ; Andrew Bruce ; Julie Grant

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Content thanks

Thanks

Ross

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

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 13:31

**To:** [REDACTED] ; First Minister ; Helen Webster ; Director Propriety and Ethics ; Ross Ingebrigtsen

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary ; [REDACTED] ; Ashleigh Gray ; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox ; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ; Colin McAllister ; Sean McGivern ; Jeanette Campbell ; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ; Michael Chalmers ; [REDACTED] ; Andrew Bruce ; Julie Grant

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Thanks [REDACTED]

@Ross Ingebrigtsen are you content with this going to FM to sign and be issued?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 13:27

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen  
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers  
<Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce  
<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

Hi [redacted],

As discussed, can you please add this text to FM template? [redacted]

[redacted]

Grateful if we can be sent a copy of the reply for records/

Thanks,

[redacted]

| Propriety and Ethics Team

1W.10, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

**From:** [redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 12:22

**To:** First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [redacted]  
[redacted]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray  
<Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister  
<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen  
<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]

[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers

<Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce

<Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Julie Grant <Julie.Grant@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

**Importance:** High

Hi [REDACTED] Michael,

[REDACTED]

I am not sure if this is part of the process given the resignation but please take forward ASAP and send a reply for FM's consideration today.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary to the First Minister

5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** First Minister

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 11:46

**To:** Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Ashleigh Gray <Ashleigh.Gray@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretariat Inbox <CabinetSecretariat@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister

<Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <Sean.McGivern@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen

<Ross.Ingebrigtsen@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Director Propriety and Ethics <DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]

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

**Subject:** RE: URGENT - Complaints handling under Ministerial Code

[REDACTED],

We have now received a letter from Mr Ross – grateful for further advice on handling today please?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary

Office of the First Minister

Mobile: [REDACTED]

**Doc 14:**

**From:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 19 September 2025 16:29

**To:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; First Minister <FirstMinister@gov.scot>; John Webster <John.Webster@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Helen Webster <Helen.Webster@gov.scot>; Michael Chalmers <Michael.Chalmers2@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Communications Duty Box <CommunicationsDutyBox@gov.scot>; MPO Admin <MPOAdmin@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Resignation of Minister for Parliamentary Business

Afternoon all

You will have, by now, seen the news that Mr Hepburn has today submitted his resignation as Minister for Parliamentary Business to the First Minister – which the First Minister has accepted. A decision on a replacement has not yet been made, and this is a matter between the FM and his political team. While I do not anticipate a decision over the weekend, in the event that a new Minister is appointed before Monday, Colin McAllister will let me know and I will undertake an introductory call with them to provide an introduction and discuss arrangements. There will be no requirement for the Parliamentary Business PO to be on call over the weekend.

Once [REDACTED] is back from annual leave on Monday, we will discuss what is required in terms of outgoing and incoming Ministers. I know [REDACTED] and the team have already begun digging out induction materials in order to support a new Minister which is really helpful. In terms of the closing down of old mailboxes, IT kit hand back etc, this can all wait until next week, although I am grateful to [REDACTED] for actively considering this.

My thanks to the Parliamentary Business PO team for their outstanding professionalism over the past 24 hours.

Any questions, please contact me.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

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

**M:** [REDACTED]