USE OF PARLIAMENTARY RESOURCES AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The SPCB has a statutory responsibility to provide the property, staff and services required for the Parliament’s purposes. This notice provides guidance on the SPCB’s policies on the use of parliamentary resources and external communications.

(1) **The Use of Parliamentary resources**

Parliamentary resources are provided by the SPCB to support Members with their parliamentary duties. These include items such as office equipment, IT (including the e-mail system), furniture, meeting rooms and all other SPCB provided resources. These resources must not be used for any other purpose, including any significant party political purposes.

The SPCB appreciates there can sometimes be a fine line between something that is parliamentary and party political and Members have to use their judgement accordingly. Where there is any doubt, Members are encouraged to seek advice from the contact points provided in the guidance.

(2) **Guidance on external communications.**

To ensure consistency in the use of parliamentary resources for external communications and references to party affiliation the SPCB has issued the attached guidance drawing together guidance on a number of related matters into one document for the convenience of Members.

The guidance covers:

- The use of Parliamentary postage and stationery
- The use of the corporate identity (parliamentary logo)
- Political party affiliation
- Newsletters and annual reports
- Media/ press releases and other media activity
- Surveys
- Websites
- The use of meeting rooms for external events and invitations to events

Members’ attention is drawn to sections 7.2.11 and 7.2.14 of the Code of Conduct for Members about the use of SPCB facilities and services.

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
November 2009
Guidance on External Communications

A Parliamentary Postage and Stationery

A1. Where can I find a copy of the SPCB’s policy on postage and stationery?

A copy of the policy is available at http://intranet/msps/stationery.aspx

A2. Under the policy on postage and stationery what items are provided centrally to Members?

The following items are available to Members in both the Parliament and local offices and the costs of these items will be met centrally by the SPCB, provided they are purchased from an SPCB contract. These items will not form part of the annual Capped Provision set out in A3.

- All paper
- Plain envelopes
- Compliment slips, notepads and acknowledgement cards
- Members’ Parliamentary business cards
- Printer toner and Photocopier toner and maintenance
- Desk accessories and computer consumables such as pens, paper clips, card, wipes, discs etc
- Maintenance costs of photocopiers

*The SPCB has decided that existing photocopiers purchased by Members on or before 14 November 2009 under the Office Costs provision (or Members’ Support Allowance of the previous Allowances Scheme) can also have the maintenance costs met centrally.

A3. Where postage and stationery is not provided centrally, what is the capped limit?

The capped limit for the provision of postage and stationery will be reviewed on an annual basis by the SPCB and Members will be informed of any changes. For the financial year 2009/10 the maximum limit is £5,500 per Member.
A4. What items can be charged to the Capped Postage and Stationery provision?

The following items can be ordered from the SPCB’s centrally held contracts and will be charged against the maximum annual limit of £5,500 per Member.

- Postage – Including the pre-paid element, stamps, freepost, courier, parcels
- Parliamentary headed envelopes
- Members’ staff business cards,
- Costs of personalising office stationery to Members requirements such as addresses, photographs, messages etc
- Printing of Newsletters / surveys / annual reports

If for any reason you are unsure of an item, please contact Facilities Management on 0131 348 6047 or FM Helpdesk on 0131 348 5100.

A5. Must I use the Capped Provision for postage and stationery which is not provided centrally?

Members can elect to charge postage and stationery costs to the Capped Provision up to the maximum annual limit, the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme or to both. Where no preference is indicated, costs will be charged in the first instance to the Capped Provision.

Where a Member does not use the SPCB’s centrally held contracts to purchase stationery items, for example the purchase is made in a local supermarket, the costs of these items should be met from the Office Costs provision.

A6. What if I exceed any financial limit?

Members should ensure that maximum annual limit should not be exceeded. Members who are approaching the limit are strongly advised to contact Facilities Management (in respect of the Capped Provision) or the Allowances Offices (in respect of the Office Costs provision) to obtain an up to date report on their spend to date before entering into any further commitment from the Capped Provision or Office Costs provisions (see also A11).

If there are insufficient funds it will be the Member’s responsibility to meet any costs from his or her own resources.
### A7. What can parliamentary postage and stationery be used for?

Parliamentary postage and stationery may be used for any of the following. The list is illustrative but not exhaustive:

- Responding to correspondence received by a Member which relates to parliamentary or constituency matters
- Correspondence with Government departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, public bodies, local government and other Parliaments/Assemblies on parliamentary matters
- Correspondence with Members or staff on parliamentary matters.
- Updating individuals or groups in relation to matters they have previously raised with the Member
- Informing constituents in areas where there has been a specific problem of developments in relation to that problem.
- Annual reports, contact leaflets or newsletters
- Targeted correspondence relating to issues of importance locally, including circulars, questionnaires or surveys, petitions
- Freepost facilities (non-prepaid envelopes only)
- Calendars (but not covering any year in which a Scottish parliamentary general election is to be held)
- The postage costs for Christmas cards sent in an official parliamentary capacity.

### A8. Are there any limitations on the use of parliamentary postage and stationery?

Yes. Parliamentary postage and stationery shall not be used for the following:

- Party political activities
- Communications of a non-parliamentary or commercial nature
- Advocating membership of a political party, supporting the return of a person to a public office.
- Fundraising of any kind
- Birthday or greeting cards or messages
- Petitions, surveys or questionnaires associated with national political campaigning or local elections

A9. How do I order stationery?

Please follow the link below to the FM pages on SPEIR for further guidance on ordering stationery. [http://intranet/organisation/offices-a-i/fm/fm-station.aspx](http://intranet/organisation/offices-a-i/fm/fm-station.aspx)

Should you experience any difficulty in ordering parliamentary stationery please do not hesitate to contact Facilities Management on 0131 348 6047 or the FM helpdesk on 0131 348 5100.

Members are asked to note that all prepaid headed envelopes, including the postage element, are charged for as soon as they have been supplied. These should be safeguarded to prevent misuse and not be overprinted in any way. Spoilt prepaid envelopes should be returned to the Facilities Management Office to ensure return of postage.

A10. What if I want to outsource the printing of any communication?

The outsourcing of printing by a Member to a local firm, for example for any bulk printing of an annual report, is permissible. Members should ensure that they receive value for money when outsourcing any printing and this would normally mean obtaining competitive quotes.

On receipt of an invoice, Members should authorise the invoice for payment and annotate on the invoice whether the costs should be charged to the Capped Provision, the Office Costs provision or specify how it is to be split.

Members should note that invoices not annotated with payment instructions will automatically be charged to the Capped Provision, provided sufficient resources are available, if not, the remaining balance will be charged to the Office Cost provision. The invoice should be submitted for payment to the Allowances Office.
A11. How will expenditure be monitored centrally?

Monthly statements of expenditure will be available to all Members detailing how much expenditure has been incurred against their Capped Provision.

Members are advised to check these statements carefully and should there be any queries to contact Facilities Management on 0131 348 6047 to discuss the matter as any expenditure from the Capped Provision will be published. Members will automatically receive notification when they are approaching the maximum annual limit of the Capped Provision.

A12. Can I make capital purchases?

The purchase or leasing of capital equipment such as a risograph (for the purpose producing newsletters/annual reports) can be met from the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme.

Members may choose to share the cost of buying such equipment provided the costs are met from the individual Members’ Office Costs provision.

Capital equipment purchased using Office Costs provision must only be used for Parliamentary purposes.

**Improper use of stationery**

Member’s attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.11), about the use of SPCB facilities and services, such as the provision of postage and stationery covered by this guidance.

Member’s attention is also drawn to the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme (paragraph 1.5.2) which covers improper claims in respect of the Office Costs provision.

**Enquiries**

Any enquiries on the policy on postage and stationery should be addressed to Kirsty McGuire (Capped Provision) on 0131 348 6047 or Jackie Giulianotti (Office Costs Provision) on 0131 348 6609.
B. **Use of the Corporate Identity (parliamentary logo)**

B1. Where can I find a copy of the SPCB’s policy on the use of the corporate identity (parliamentary logo)?

A copy of the policy is available at

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/18160.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/intranet/18160.aspx)

B2. Do I require all uses of the corporate identity to be cleared by someone before it is printed/ reproduced?

The corporate identity should only be used in accordance with this guidance and the SPCB Corporate Identity policy.

Members are encouraged to seek advice from the corporate publications team on the correct use and version of the corporate identity prior to publication/production. The Corporate Publications Team can be contacted on 0131 348 5366.

B3. What can I use the corporate identity on?

The identity can be used on:

- Headed stationery (including personalised stationery),
- Annual reports, newsletters, circulars etc
- Information (leaflets, newsletters or other), explaining the work of the Parliament. Such information should always be of a non-party political nature.
- Notices advertising a Member’s surgery
- Ad hoc presentations as a Member of the Parliament
- Broadcasts by individual Members explaining their parliamentary role and work only.

B4. Can I use the corporate identity on anything else?

If you wish to use the identity on anything not listed above advice must be sought from the Corporate Publications Team. Novel and/or contentious applications of
the identity, which are not described in this guidance, may be referred to the SPCB for consideration

B5. Can I use the corporate identity on my constituency/ regional office signage?

Yes, the Scottish Parliament logo can be used on local constituency and regional office signage. Advice is available from the corporate publications team.

B6. Can I use my political party logo and/or political affiliation on constituency / regional office signage?

No, the SPCB has decided that party logos and political affiliation cannot be used on constituency and regional office signage.

B7. What happens if I already use my political party logo/political affiliation on my constituency / regional office signage?

The SPCB appreciates that this is a change in policy. It requires that all constituency/regional office signage refreshes, undertaken from the communication of this guidance in November 2009, should comply with the decision to not allow political party logos and/or political party affiliation on local constituency/regional office signage.

All constituency / regional offices must comply with the decision to not display political party logos/ political party affiliation by 1 September 2011.

B8. Can I use my party logo with the parliament’s corporate identity?

No, it is not permissible to use a political party logo with the Parliament’s corporate identity.

B9. Can I reproduce the corporate identity using any colour including the corporate colour of my political party?

No, the corporate identity can only be reproduced in purple (Pantone 2607), black ink or silver or gold foil.
B10. Can I change the colour of the Saltire (cross)?

The Saltire (cross) must always be white.

B11. Can I use individual elements of the corporate identity?

No, the identity is made up of two elements: the badge and the text element. These can not be separated.

B12. Can I use an English or Gaelic only version of the corporate identity?

No, the SPCB has agreed that the text element of the identity should be in English and Gaelic.

B13. Can I change the text element to another language, for example, Scots or add in a third language?

No, the SPCB has agreed that the text element of the identity should be in English and Gaelic only.

B14. Can I include the name of my spouse on Christmas cards bearing the parliament’s corporate identity?

Yes, the SPCB has agreed that it is acceptable to include the name of your partner/ spouse along with your own on parliamentary Christmas cards.

B15. Can I change the shape of the corporate identity to make it fit the space I have available?

No, the corporate identity must not be changed in any way.
B16. Can I make the corporate identity smaller to make it fit the space I have available?

Yes, the identity can be re-sized, but it should never be smaller than 23 mm wide, and ideally it should be larger than this. The corporate publications team can provide a version of the identity that can be re-sized without distorting the proportions.

**Improper use of the Corporate Identity**

Members attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (Paragraph 7.2.11).

Members are also reminded that the identity is subject to heraldic, copyright and Trade Mark laws and that misuse of the identity may result in legal action.

**Enquiries**

Any enquiries on the policy on the use of the corporate identity should be addressed to the Corporate Publications Team on 0131 348 5366, or 0131 348 6232, or by email to Corporate Publications Team.
C. Political party affiliation

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee’s Report on rule changes to Chapter 8 of the Parliament’s Code of Conduct for Members covering engagement and liaison with constituents was agreed by the Parliament on 25 March 2009.

The Committee invited the SPCB to consider revisiting its policy preventing the use of party political affiliation in the description of a Member’s status attaching to their signature. In the light of the Committee’s report the SPCB has agreed, as a matter of policy, that Members can now use their party political affiliation in the description of their status in the following circumstances.

C1. Can I refer to my party political affiliation when issuing external letters using parliamentary headed paper?

Yes. Members may include a reference to their party affiliation together with the description of their electoral status as part of their signature. It is not acceptable to incorporate this, or any additional logo, to the header of any parliamentary communications.

Members should describe themselves in the following terms:

“[Name]
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] [(party affiliation in brackets)]”

An example letter is available at Annex B.

C2. Can I use my party logo to highlight my party affiliation on any parliamentary funded communication?

No. Party political logos should not be used on any form of communication which is prepared and/ or issued using parliamentary resources.
C3. Can I refer to the fact that I am a member of a particular political party on any communication?

A communication issued using parliamentary resources must relate to a Member’s parliamentary duties. Similarly, any communication issued by a group pool must be parliamentary in nature.

If a Member wishes to refer to their political party in any communication, they shall do so by using the following template to describe themselves:

“[Communication] issued by [Name]
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/region] (party affiliation in brackets)”

Where a communication is issued by a parliamentary party group pool they shall use the following template is used:

“[Communication] issued by the [party] parliamentary group”

C4. Can I refer to the position I hold within the party?

It is permissible within a communication to refer to the Member’s portfolio role for example if the Member is a spokesperson for the parliamentary party on a specific matter.

Communications should not refer to a position held within the wider political party.

C5. Can I provide my parliamentary contact details or those of my staff for a political party event?

No. The contact details provided for a political party event, such as a conference or seminar, should be those of the political party. A parliamentary telephone extension or e-mail account, either in the parliamentary complex or at a local office, should not be used for any non-parliamentary event.

Members are reminded that, under the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme, staff must not undertake any significant party political activity during any
hours of work which are included within claims made by Members to meet staff salary costs.

C6. Can I use my parliamentary e-mail account or telephone to contact or correspond with my party headquarters?

This is a matter of judgement for Members. Any use must be minimal in nature and frequency and must not result in the significant use of resources.

C7. Can I refer to my political party on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

No, Members are not permitted to refer to their political party affiliation on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition they are sponsoring at Parliament.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.

C8. Can I use my political party logo on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

No, Members are not permitted to use their political party logo on invitations and/or other materials for an event/exhibition they are sponsoring at parliament.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.

C9. Can I use the Parliament corporate identity on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

The Scottish Parliament logo can only be used by current Members of the Scottish Parliament. As such it cannot be used on invitations and/or other materials being issued by a third party, even where the event/exhibition is being sponsored by a Member.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.
Improper use of the SPCB’s policy on party affiliation

Members’ attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.11).

Enquiries

Any enquiries on the policy on the use of the SPCB’s policy on party affiliation should be addressed to Huw Williams on 0131 348 6836.
D. **Newsletters and annual reports**

D1. **What is the purpose of a newsletter or annual report?**

A newsletter or annual report, produced using parliamentary resources, should inform constituents about a Member’s work. It can be used to consult with constituents or local groups, or to provide information about how to contact Members.

D2. **How should I pay for the costs of my newsletter or annual report?**

The costs of a newsletter or annual report including stationery, printing and distribution can be met from the Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme or from both.

Where the newsletter or annual report is being produced externally Members should satisfy themselves that the work has been undertaken to their satisfaction, authorise the invoice for payment and annotate on the invoice whether the costs should be charged to the Capped Provision, the Office Costs provision or specify how it should be split between them.

Members should note that invoices not annotated with payment instructions will be automatically charged to the Capped Provision, provided sufficient resources are available, if not, the remaining balance will be charged to the Office Cost provision.

The invoice should be submitted for payment to the Allowances Office.

D3. **How do I identify it as parliamentary publication?**

The Parliament’s corporate identity **must** appear in any publication. ([Section B](#) provides advice on the use of the corporate identity).

In addition each publication **must** include a note explaining that the costs are met from Parliamentary resources. The wording of such a note, which must be clearly visible, should be as follows:

‘The costs of this publication have been met out of parliamentary resources’.
### D4. Who can receive a newsletter/annual report?

Parliamentary newsletters and other publications can be distributed to all constituents or a targeted local group, for example residents affected by a development scheme.

Communications should not be distributed outside a Member’s electoral area.

### D5. Can any political material be included in the same mail drop as newsletters/annual reports?

No. Parliamentary resources must not be used to meet the cost of distributing any non-parliamentary material.

### D6. What can be included in a newsletter/annual report?

Without being too prescriptive the following material can be used in any newsletter/annual report:

- Information about the Member
- Factual information about Parliament, debates etc
- Details of surgeries and how to get in touch
- Factual material about work undertaken by the Member
- Factual information about local public services e.g. the local authority
- Surveys/questionnaires relating to important local matters

### D7. Can I describe myself in a publication as the [party name] MSP?

If a Member wishes to refer to their political party in any communication, they should do so by using the following template to describe themselves:

“[Communication] issued by [Name]  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/region] (party affiliation in brackets)”
D8. Are there any limitations on what can be included in a newsletter/annual report?

Yes, Members must ensure that newsletters or annual reports do not include any of the following:

- Material that promotes, criticises or campaigns for or against anyone seeking election
- Perspectives, comments or arguments with the intention of promoting the interests of any person, political party or organisation you support, or damaging the interests of any other such person, party or organisation
- Fund raising
- Surveys or questionnaires linked to party political or national campaigning
- Business activities, or to obtain any personal benefit.

D9. What about the content of newsletters and annual reports?

The content of any publication should not seek, directly or indirectly, to compare a Member’s party favourably with another, promote one party at the expense of another party or seek to undermine the reputations of political opponents. In this context, the selective use of statistics should also be avoided.

D10. Are photographs permissible?

Yes, but these must not display party campaign slogans or campaign material.

D11. In a publication can I refer to the Government by its party label?

You can refer to the Scottish Government, the Government or the minority Government (as examples), but you should not refer to the Government by party.
D12. Do I require the newsletter/ annual report to be cleared by anyone before it is printed?

No, all newsletters and annual reports should be produced in accordance with this guidance. The responsibility rests with the Member to comply with the guidance.

Should any Member wish to seek advice on the content of any publication to reduce the risk of any complaint being upheld a draft of the publication can be submitted to the Allowances Office for advice prior to printing (contact 0131 348 6609). Advice on the use of the corporate identity is available from the corporate publications team (0131 348 5366).

D13. Is it possible to issue a joint newsletter/ annual report with an MP or MEP?

Yes, but Members wishing to produce a joint publication with an MP or MEP must ensure the entire content is free of party political or campaigning material. Members who wish to include material not allowed under this guidance shall fund the whole cost of the publication from another source.

Members must also be aware that the use of political party logos is not permitted on any joint publication.

D14. What if I want to outsource the printing of any communication?

The outsourcing of printing by a Member to a local firm, for example for any bulk printing of an annual report, is permissible. Members should ensure that they receive value for money when outsourcing any printing and this would normally mean obtaining competitive quotes.

On receipt of an invoice, Members should authorise the invoice for payment and annotate on the invoice whether the costs should be charged to the capped provision, the Office Costs provision or specify how it is to be split.

Members should note that invoices not annotated with payment instructions will automatically be charged to the Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, provided sufficient resources are available, if not, the remaining balance will be charged to the Office Cost provision. The invoice should be submitted for payment to the Allowances Office.
Improper use of newsletters and annual reports

Members are responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are fully complied with. If they have not been, a Member might be asked to repay any costs involved, and may also expose themselves to allegations of misuse of parliamentary stationery.

Members attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.14). Members are reminded that official stationery and mail is for use only as part of official Parliamentary business. It must not be used for any other purpose, including party political purposes.

Enquiries

Any enquiries on newsletters and annual reports should be addressed to the Allowances Office on 0131 348 6609.
E. **Media releases and other media activity**

The SPCB appreciates that there can sometimes be a fine line between something that is parliamentary and party political and Members have to use their judgement accordingly in line with the guidance provided.

E1. Can I describe myself in a media release as the [party name] MSP?

If a Member wishes to refer to their political party in any communication, they shall do so by using the following template to describe themselves:

"Media/ Press release issued by [Name] Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] (party affiliation in brackets)"

Where a communication is issued by a parliamentary party group pool they must use the following template:

"Media/ Press release issued by the [party] parliamentary group"

E2. Can I refer to a position I hold within the party group?

It is permissible within a communication to refer to the Member’s portfolio role for example if the Member is a spokesperson for the parliamentary party on a specific matter.

Communications should not refer to a position held within the wider political party.

E3. Can I use my party logo to highlight my party affiliation on any media/press?

No. Party political logos should not be used on any form of communication which is prepared and/ or issued using parliamentary resources.

E4. What about the content of media/ press releases?

Any media/ press release must be parliamentary in nature.
Media/press releases should not be used to promote, criticise or campaign for or against anyone seeking election.

E5. Can I refer to comments made by myself or another MSP during a debate in a media/press release?

Yes, where it is in relation to a parliamentary issue being pursued by the Member references can be made to debates.

Members should have regard to the Members’ Code of Conduct in how they treat other Members.

E6. Can I refer to comments made by an MP during a Westminster debate in a press release?

Where it is in relation to a parliamentary issue being pursued by the Member references can be made to debates in other legislatures. However, parliamentary resources should not be used to promote the views of others such as MPs, MEPs local authority councillors, election candidates (for any election) or campaign groups.

E7. Can I include quotes of endorsement from the local councillor for the area in any press release?

No. Parliamentary resources should not be used to promote quotes from local authority councillors.

This also applies to MPs, MEPs, election candidates (for any election) or campaign groups.

E8. Can I organise photocalls in the Parliament?

Yes, but photocalls should be organised with respect for the privacy of other building users in mind and in a way which ensures that there is no disruption to parliamentary activities, including Garden Lobby events.
E9. Can I film myself for the purposes of my website or other social media in the Parliament?

Yes. Members and/or their staff are entitled to carry out their own recording / filming / photography in relation to their parliamentary duties. Any filming should be carried out respecting the privacy of other building users and in a way which ensures that there is no disruption to parliamentary activities. Recording / filming in the Chamber requires the prior permission of the Presiding Officer.

Recording /filming / photography of a party political nature or for party political purposes are not permitted within the parliamentary complex.

E10. Can I hold a media conference in the Parliament?

Yes. Meeting rooms may be used by a Member for media briefings and media conferences on parliamentary matters and may be attended by external parties. Meeting rooms should not be used to enable third parties to brief the media or to hold media conferences even if the event is hosted by a Member.

Enquiries

Any enquiries on media/ press photocalls and conferences should be addressed to the Media Relations Office on 0131 348 6852.
F. **Surveys**

F1. How would I meet the costs of a survey I wish to undertake locally?

The Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme or both may be used for seeking views from a section of the community which is likely to be affected by any new proposal, for example the closure of a local post office.

Subject to Section 8.10 of the Code of Conduct, any such survey should be restricted to those directly affected by any proposal, using the above example, households that use the local post office.

F2. What If I wanted to undertake a larger survey?

The costs of a larger survey, for example, relating to the closure of a number of local facilities in a constituency can also be met from the Capped (postage and stationery) Provision, the Office Costs provision of the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme or from both.

Members must have regard to the requirements of Section 8 of the Code of Conduct which deals with the relationship between constituency and regional Members.

Further advice on the Code of Conduct can be obtained from the Clerks to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

F3. Are there any restrictions on what I can undertake a survey on?

Any survey must be in connection with your role as an elected member and relate to parliamentary duties.

It must not be political or seek a political view.

F4. Can I describe myself in a survey as the [party name] MSP?

If a Member wishes to refer to their political party in any communication, they shall do so by using the following template to describe themselves:

“Survey issued by [Name]
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] (party affiliation in brackets)”
Improper use of surveys

Members attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.14). Members are reminded that official stationery and mail is for use only as part of official Parliamentary business. It must not be used for any other purpose, including party political purposes.

Enquiries

Any enquiries on surveys should be addressed to the Allowances Office on 0131 348 6609.
G. **Websites**

G1. If my website is funded from parliamentary resources do I need to acknowledge that?

Yes, there is a minimum requirement for Members to display, prominently, on the homepage of a website a statement that it is funded from Parliamentary resources.

The following form of words shall be used:

“The costs of this website have been met out of parliamentary resources”

The website should make clear that any complaints about content should be made initially to the SPCB.

A Member may also wish to consider adding a link to the Parliament’s official website.

G2. Can I describe myself on my website as the [party name] MSP?

On a parliamentary funded website Members shall describe themselves in the following terms:

“[Name]  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] [(party affiliation in brackets)]”

G3. What can be included on a website funded by parliamentary resources?

Without being too prescriptive the following material can be used:

- Information about the Member
- Factual information about Parliament, debates etc
- Details of surgeries and how to get in touch
- Factual material about work undertaken by the Member
- Factual information about local public services e.g. the local authority
G4. Are there any limitations on what can be included in a website funded by parliamentary resources?

Yes, Members must ensure that a website funded by parliamentary resources does not include any of the following:

- Material that promotes, criticises or campaigns for or against anyone seeking election
- Perspectives, comments or arguments with the intention of promoting the interests of any person, political party or organisation you support, or damaging the interests of any other such person, party or organisation
- Fund raising
- Surveys or questionnaires linked to party political or national campaigning
- Business activities, or to obtain any personal benefit.

G5. Are there any restrictions as to the content that appears on parliamentary funded websites?

The content of any website should not seek, directly or indirectly, to compare a Member’s party favourably with another, promote one party at the expense of another party or seek to undermine the reputations of political opponents. In this context, the selective use of statistics should also be avoided.

G6. Can I put media/press releases on my website?

Yes, provided they are in line with the guidance on the content and presentation of media/press releases.

G7. Can I link my parliamentary website to my political party website?

Yes, links to other websites are permitted but only where there is a clear disclaimer. The disclaimer should use the following words and must be clearly visible:

“The Parliament is not responsible for the content of other internet sites”.
G8. Can I refer to the Government by its party label on my website?

You can refer to the Scottish Government, the Government or the minority Government (as examples), but you should not refer to the Government by political party.

G9. Can I undertake surveys on line?

Yes, but on-line surveys should not be based on national or local party political campaigns.

G10. What about on line petitions?

Petitions should be restricted to those initiated by the Member and should not be based on national or local party political campaigns.

G11. What about interactive forums?

Should a Member have an interactive forum, it is important that it is regularly monitored by a site administrator in order to remove, or to avoid the publication of, any offensive or inappropriate comments. While it is accepted that this type of open forum is likely to generate some political observations, a Member should not encourage party political comment or engage in party political debate on line.

**Improper use of websites**

Members' attention is drawn to the Members' Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.11).

**Enquiries**

Any enquiries on the policy on parliamentary funded websites should be addressed to the Allowances Office on 0131 348 6609.
H. **The use of meeting rooms for external events and invitations to events**

H1. Does the SPCB have a policy on the use of meeting rooms on the parliamentary estate?

Details on the SPCB policy for meeting rooms can be found at: [http://intranet/organisation/offices-a-i/fm/fm_rbp.aspx](http://intranet/organisation/offices-a-i/fm/fm_rbp.aspx)

H2. Does the SPCB have a policy on events?

The SPCB’s policy covering Events and Exhibitions at the Parliament can be found at [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/15169.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/visitandlearn/15169.aspx)

H3. Can I hold an event at the Scottish Parliament?

Yes, you can sponsor events at the Scottish Parliament in your parliamentary capacity so long as it meets the criteria for Member sponsored events. Members are responsible for the format and content of events on the parliamentary estate and must be in attendance for the event.

All requests to host events must be organised through the Parliament’s **Events and Exhibitions Team**.

H4. Can I hold a party political event on the parliamentary campus?

No. The parliamentary campus should only be used for events relating to a Member’s parliamentary duties.

Meeting rooms may be used by a Member for media briefings and media conferences on parliamentary matters and may be attended by external parties. Meeting rooms should not be used to enable third parties to brief the media or to hold media conferences even if the event is hosted by a Member.
H5. Can I refer to my political party on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

No, members are not permitted to refer to their political party affiliation on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition they are sponsoring at Parliament.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.

H6. Can I use my political party logo on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

No, members are not permitted to use their political party logo on invitations and/or other materials for an event/exhibition they are sponsoring at parliament.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.

H7. Can I use the Parliament corporate identity on invitations and/or other materials for an event or exhibition I am sponsoring at Parliament?

The Scottish Parliament logo can only be used by current members of the Scottish Parliament. As such it cannot be used on invitations and/or other materials being issued by a third party, even where the event/exhibition is being sponsored by an MSP.

Members are responsible for ensuring that third parties issuing invitations on their behalf do so in line with this guidance.

H8. Can I provide my parliamentary contact details or those of my staff for a party political event?

No. The contact details of an event for a political party, such as a conference or seminar, should be those of the political party. A parliamentary telephone extension or e-mail account, either in the parliamentary complex or local office, should not be used for any non-parliamentary event.

Members are reminded that, under the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme, staff must not undertake any significant party political
activity during any hours of work which are included within claims made by Members to meet staff salary costs.

H9. Can I circulate e-mails to other Members in the same political party about a forthcoming political party event?

This is a matter for the Member's judgement. If it is a brief e-mail simply detailing the time and place this would be permissible. However, if the e-mail discusses party political issues with third parties who are not Members of the Parliament this would not be an appropriate use of parliamentary resources.

Parliamentary resources such as e-mails must not be used to arrange events relating to electioneering or canvassing.

H10. Can I bring in my own catering for events?

No. The SPCB has a duty of care to ensure the safety of food served on the premises. It is impractical for the SPCB to establish that externally sourced food has been produced, transported and served in accordance with hygiene standards.

Members can arrange for their own refreshments to be used at an event, however, a corkage charge will be applied.

H11. Can external catering be brought in for events at the Parliament?

No. It is impractical for the SPCB to vet external caterers, and the use of Parliament facilities by an external caterer would impact unreasonably on the on-site catering contractor.

H12. Can I hold an exhibition in the Parliament?

Yes. Members can sponsor exhibitions at the Scottish Parliament in their parliamentary capacity so long as it meets the criteria. Members are responsible for the format and content of exhibitions on the parliamentary estate.

All requests to sponsor exhibitions must be organised through the Parliament's Events and Examinations Team.
H13. Can I launch my book at the Parliament?

Yes. Space may be booked to launch any book written by a Member. Members may also book accommodation to launch books written by other authors, provided they fall within the following categories:

- Anthologies of Members’ speeches and extracts from their diaries authorised by the Member or their family
- Biographies of former Members of the Parliament authorised by the Member or their family
- Books commissioned by or on behalf of the SPCB

And that the sale of books at any of the above launches is permitted.

H14. Can I promote a fundraising event/activity at the Parliament?

The SPCB charity policy is only to support Poppyscotland. While Members may host events and/or exhibitions to highlight the work of a charity they may not undertake fundraising activities for the charity as part of any event/activity in the Parliament. In addition, charity books will not be stocked in the Scottish Parliament shop.

Im proper use of meeting rooms

Members’ attention is drawn to the Members’ Code of Conduct (paragraph 7.2.11).

Enquiries

Any enquiries about meeting rooms should be addressed to the FM Helpdesk on 0131 348 5100.

Any enquiries about events or exhibitions should be addressed to the Events and Exhibitions team on 0131 348 6933.
MEMBER’S CODE OF CONDUCT

Paragraph 7.2.11

The SPCB has statutory responsibility to provide the property, staff and services required for the Parliament’s purposes and is legally responsible for ensuring that, in doing so, it complies with the law. The SPCB accordingly puts in place policies and procedures for such reasons as the good governance of the organisation as a whole, compliance with legal requirements, the efficient and effective operation of the Parliament’s premises and facilities and the protection of services and facilities from misuse or the perception of misuse. Members must abide by the policies that are adopted by the SPCB.

Paragraph 7.2.14

Members are reminded that official stationery and mail is for use only as part of official Parliamentary business. It must not be used for any other purpose, including party political purposes.
Dear

Yours sincerely

[Name]
Member of the Scottish Parliament for [constituency/ region] [(party affiliation in brackets)]