



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Thursday, 12 February 2026 (Session 6)

Use of Parliamentary Resources

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider whether it wishes to take any action in relation to the use of parliamentary resources by Anas Sarwar MSP in relation to him issuing an email as Scottish Labour Party leader using parliamentary resources.

Issues and options

2. Under the recently reviewed SPCB policy on the use of parliamentary resources, members are not permitted to use parliamentary resources to any significant extent in relation to party political matters. Under the policy, parliamentary resources include the use of the Parliament's IT systems and parliamentary email accounts.
3. The policy recognises that there can sometimes be a fine line between activity that is parliamentary and party political, and that maintaining a strict separation between business that properly relates to Members' duties and party-political activity can sometimes be difficult. The policy requires Members to use their judgement accordingly and where there is any doubt, Members are encouraged to seek advice from the relevant parliamentary official. In this particular instance, no advice was sought from officials.
4. The MSP Use of corporate Identity policy requires that it must be used by Members in their capacity as Members of the Scottish Parliament. It should not be used in connection with any other activities and never in connection with party political activities.
5. In this instance, a complaint has been received about a letter issued by Mr Sarwar. The letter, attached at **Annexe A**, was issued using the parliamentary email system and from the Members' parliamentary email account and included the Scottish Parliament's corporate identity, albeit an old version of the identity.
6. The letter was sent to an individual as an apology for incorrectly including inaccurate information relating to her in a Scottish Labour party leaflet. The letter was issued by Mr Sarwar as party leader and in the letter, Mr Sarwar apologised for this error and advised that he had spoken to Scottish Labour party officials about the error to ensure it would not happen again.

REFERENCE: SPCB (2026) - Paper 08 – by correspondence

7. In looking into the matter, officials spoke with Mr Sarwar and can confirm that the Members' parliamentary email account was used to issue the letter and that it did include an older version of the parliamentary identity. There was no hard copy letter issued. There are therefore no costs incurred, as we are unable to identify the cost of an email.
8. Mr Sarwar and his team advised that the letter had been issued from the parliamentary account as that is where the original complaint about the content of the party leaflet had been received and they were wary of breaching GDPR by issuing it from another non-parliamentary email account. It is also believed, after the fact, by Mr Sarwar's team that as the matter had been raised in the Chamber that day, it should be considered as parliamentary in nature and therefore would not be a breach of the policies mentioned above.
9. In considering all of the points above, we have concluded that this would equate to a breach of the parliamentary resources policy in that parliamentary resources have been used in relation to a clear party matter. However, the SPCB will wish to note that the breach is not significant given the cost of issuing an email is so small that it is not calculable and the corporate identity used has been on an electronic document and there are no costs in terms of printing or mailing the letter.
10. We would therefore recommend that Mr Sarwar be reminded of the rules of the use of parliamentary resources policy and the MSP Use of corporate identity policy by the Head of Allowances Office on behalf of the SPCB and no further action is taken in relation to this matter.

Governance

11. Under the SPCB Use of parliamentary resources policy and MSP Use of corporate identity policy, the SPCB can take action in relation to any breach of the policies.

Resource implications

12. There are no resource implications in relation to this matter.

Publication Scheme

13. The paper can be published in line with the SPCB's publication policy.

Next steps

14. The Member will be advised of the outcome following SPCB consideration of the matter and if the SPCB agree, the Member will be reminded of the rules regarding the use of parliamentary resources and the corporate identity by the Head of Allowances on behalf of the SPCB.
15. The Head of Allowances will also prepare and issue a response, to the complainant to advise on the outcome of their complaint.

REFERENCE: SPCB (2026) - Paper 08 – by correspondence

Decision

16. The SPCB is invited to agree that the Head of Allowances write to Mr Sarwar to remind him of the requirements of the use of parliamentary resources and corporate identity policies.

Allowances Office

2 February 2026

Annexe A: Copy of letter issued by Mr Sarwar



Dear Claire,

I would like to take this opportunity to unreservedly apologise to you. The error with the leaflet should not have occurred, and I can fully understand your frustration that it did. I am deeply sorry for any distress this has caused.

Having now had the opportunity to speak to Scottish Labour Party officials, I can assure you that steps have been taken to ensure that such an error does not happen again.

I am grateful that you took the time to share with us your personal experiences when we met in Stranraer, and for highlighting the need for better maternity services in all parts of Scotland. The work you and fellow campaigners are doing to keep this issue at the forefront of people's minds is hugely important, and I cannot thank you enough for the work you are doing. I am committed to making sure we have better maternity care in every part of the country.

I commend you on your continued work and would like to wish you well in future.

Yours Sincerely,



Anas Sarwar
Scottish Labour leader