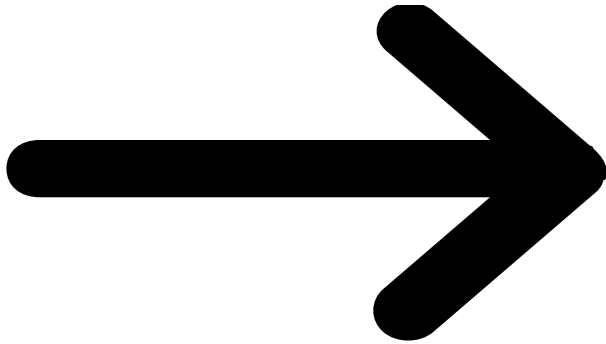


# First Minister's double standards over Salmond scandal

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The Scottish Conservatives have accused the First Minister of double standards over her ducking and diving on the Alex Salmond affair.

At First Minister's questions, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw challenged her to provide accurate information regarding the meetings she had with the former First Minister, Alex Salmond.

In response, Nicola Sturgeon refused to do so, saying such matters were for the inquiries to come.

However, in 2007 when challenging former Scottish labour leader Wendy Alexander over party donations, Sturgeon said that she should not hide behind any inquiries that were going on at the same time.

The Scottish Parliament is due to launch an inquiry into the botched Scottish Government investigation into allegations against the former First Minister, as requested by the Scottish Conservatives.

Nicola Sturgeon did confirm that she will give evidence, in person, to the Scottish Parliamentary inquiry.

Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative interim leader said:

"The First Minister cannot continue to duck these questions in the chamber of the Scottish Parliament while her spin doctors are briefing in the corridors of the Scottish Parliament, with their version of the same issues.

"Nicola Sturgeon has been caught out – when the boot was on the other foot she said opponents couldn't hide behind inquiries, now she's in the spotlight she's dashing for the long grass.

"We have two completely contradictory version of events. Both simply cannot be right.

"For her to attack those asking legitimate questions about this scandal is beneath the office of First Minister.

"Numerous questions are still outstanding and the First Minister cannot hide forever.

"On the conduct of both the Scottish Government internal inquiry and the Scottish Parliamentary inquiry, these inquiries need to be thorough and transparent – and be seen to be so.

"The SNP must show they are committed to that so we get to the bottom of this affair."