

Sturgeon and cabinet ministers 'abused' use of official cars

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Nicola Sturgeon and eight of her top team have been accused of using ministerial cars to travel from party political events.

It was reported today that eight cabinet ministers used taxpayer-funded vehicles to leave the SNP General Election manifesto launch in Perth in May.

Now it has been revealed that the First Minister travelled in an official vehicle to and from a campaign event in Stirling on April 26, where she was famously photographed posing on an independence-branded motorbike.

Both incidents appear to be in breach of the Ministerial Code, which states: "Ministers must not use public resources for party political purposes."

Information published this week showed John Swinney, Derek Mackay, Shona Robison, Fiona Hyslop, Alasdair Allan, Maureen Watt, Paul Wheelhouse and Fergus Ewing all clambered into ministerial cars following the launch on May 30.

None of them listed a ministerial engagement on that day.

This followed the example of Ms Sturgeon a few days earlier, who even the SNP campaign diary admits "was in Stirling today to meet voters and visit local businesses".

Scottish Conservative MSP Miles Briggs said:

"The public will be deeply uncomfortable at the idea of eight ministers swanning out of such a party political event and straight into a taxpayer-funded car.

"And they obviously took their lead from Nicola Sturgeon a few days earlier, who may have enjoyed posing on a Yes-themed motorbike for a publicity stunt.

"But what the cameras didn't pick up was the taxpayer-funded fancy car waiting round the corner.

"It's the kind of hypocrisy and abuse the SNP is becoming renowned for.

"Anyone can see just how political events like a manifesto launch or

photocall are, and the ministerial code clearly states this kind of thing would be a breach.

“If it was one minister, attending one government event, you could probably forgive this as an oversight.

“But for half the cabinet and the First Minister to be involved reeks of privileged complacency.

“SNP ministers seem to have forgotten that these cars are paid for by the public, and they risk not being taken seriously when they complain about limited resources available.”

Notes to editors:

For more on the story featuring eight ministers getting official cars from the SNP manifesto launch, visit:

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15594255.SNP_leadership_accused_of_abuse_of_public_funds_over_manifesto_launch/

The full data publications are available on the Scottish Government website (*Ministerial engagements, travel and gifts*, 11 October 2017, [link](#), [link](#), [link](#))

- Sturgeon and eight SNP ministers appear breached the code of conduct. Section 1.2.(i) of the Ministerial Code of Conduct states: ‘Ministers must not use public resources for party political purposes’ (*Scottish Ministerial Code*, August 2016 p2, [link](#)).
- Sturgeon’s visit to Stirling was clearly a campaign event. She was photographed on an independence-branded motorbike and the SNP website lists Sturgeon on the campaign trail (SNP website, 26 April 2017, [link](#); Scottish Sun, 26 April 2017, [link](#)).
- Eight ministers used a ministerial car to travel from Perth Concert Hall to various locations on 30 May 2017. The SNP launched their General Election Manifesto 2017 at Perth Concert Hall on 30 May. None of these eight ministers have listed an engagement in Perth on 30 May (Scottish Government, *Ministerial engagements, travel and gifts: May 2017*, 11 October 2017, [link](#)).