



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington**  
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Clare Adamson MSP  
Convener, Constitution, Europe, External  
Affairs and Culture Committee  
The Scottish Parliament

Our Ref:  
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16 January 2024

Dear Clare,

Thank you for the letter of 13 November to the Foreign Secretary. He has asked me to respond as the FCDO minister responsible for devolution. Thank you also for sharing the Committee's recent report on National Outcomes and your review of the Scottish Government's international work.

Since 5 July the UK Government has engaged with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that we deliver on the manifesto commitment to re-set our relations with the devolved governments. We are committed to working collaboratively with the devolved governments across the range of domestic and international challenges to deliver benefits for all parts of the UK, in support of the government's growth mission.

On international matters, we have demonstrated our commitment to engage meaningfully and substantively on a range of issues: the Foreign Secretary spoke with Cabinet Secretary Robertson in August, as did I when I was in Edinburgh in September, and then more recently while the Cabinet Secretary was in London on the 27 November. On each occasion we have underlined our commitment to working with the Scottish Government to promote Scottish interests internationally.

FCDO officials have engaged Scottish Government counterparts on key international policies. This includes, for example, substantial engagement on the ongoing work on agreeing a UK-Germany Treaty, where updates and draft documents have been shared, and opportunity provided for Scottish Government officials to comment and input into drafts. Similarly, the FCDO's internal reviews, launched by the Foreign Secretary in September – on Economic Diplomacy, Global Impact and International Development - will inform and

shape how the FCDO delivers UKG priorities internationally in the coming years: Scottish Government officials (alongside those in the Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive) have been engaged and updated on progress on each of those reviews. I expect that the recommendations arising from the reviews once concluded will continue to strengthen how we work with devolved governments.

There is of course more to do. I have been greatly encouraged by the responses from devolved government ministers to our efforts so far and I, like the Foreign Secretary, am committed to building on the positive start we have made. We will continue to work with the Scottish Government, and with other UKG Departments to identify where more can be done to maximise international engagement and champion Scotland overseas.

I note with interest your intention to raise with the Scottish Government the status of the International Relations Concordat, one of the supplementary agreements which underpinned the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding between the UKG and devolved government ministers. The Intergovernmental Relations Review (IGRR) which was published in January 2022 superseded the 2013 MoU in many respects, and set out arrangements for how international engagement could be discussed between the UK and devolved governments (per para 13 of the IGRR). Nonetheless we continue to view the principles and practices outlined in the International Relations Concordat as being valid, appropriate and helpful in guiding our engagement.

I trust this response has been useful and has provided some assurance that the UKG shares the Committee's view that increased and meaningful engagement between the UKG and the Scottish Government on international activity will provide us with the best opportunity to deliver for Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Baroness Chapman of Darlington'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C'.

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington**  
**Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean**