

# Quotes on the Higher History review from Opposition Spokespeople

Mentions on social media and in coverage on the Higher History report from 6 November

## **Pam Duncan-Glancy – Lab**

14 Nov – Herald - The questions over Higher History marking saga just won't stop coming: Labour's Pam Duncan-Glancy was aghast that the SQA had "decided to try and blame pupils and teachers for what went wrong here."

13 Nov - Herald - Swinney may have misled Holyrood on Higher exam Controversy: Ms Duncan-Glancy said that Mr Swinney has "questions to answer". She also referenced the 2020 exam algorithm scandal and warned that the First Minister risks presiding over another "exams fiasco".

Ms Duncan-Glancy said: "This debacle lays bare all of the failings of the SNP's qualifications body – they are disconnected from the classroom and are happy to protect their own instead of protecting Scotland's education system.

"Last week, the First Minister said the review was scrutinised, but this latest revelation leaves him with questions to answer. The First Minister has already presided over an exams fiasco and it is looking increasingly likely that he's going to preside over another".

13 Nov – [on Twitter PDG shared the above Herald article with comment alongside a clip of her questioning the FM in parliament about Higher History:](#)

'Watch John Swinney's answer to me last week' - The video exchange is the Extract from FMQ's on the Review of Higher History Attainment on 7 Nov below

13 Nov – TESS online - Ministerial statement demanded over handling of Higher history review: Scottish Labour is demanding a ministerial statement on "the chaos surrounding last year's Higher history exam" and "handling of this fiasco" by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), saying "huge questions" remained unanswered.

the education secretary Jenny Gilruth "must come before the Parliament and provide some much-needed answers on this saga".

"The SNP has huge questions to answer about the chaos surrounding last year's Higher history exam and the SQA's handling of this fiasco.

"At every turn, the SNP has covered for the SQA instead of standing up for pupils and teachers."

13–14 Nov – Herald - Labour demands parliamentary statement from Gilruth over SQA Higher History "saga":

Repeats the quote above fused in TES and adds:

"Scottish education has been let down by SNP incompetence for too long – we need genuine reform and a change in direction."

9 Nov – Herald - SQA spoke only to 'senior appointees'

Pam Duncan-Glancy said the "astonishing revelation" casts more fresh doubt on the finding of the SQA review. She said: "Teachers have been sounding the alarm on this exam for months, and it beggars belief they weren't spoken to as part of the investigation. The SQA has completely lost touch with schools, but the SNP government continues to defend it at every turn.

“The SNP government must step in to get some answers about this fiasco, and must deliver a genuine change in direction for our education system.”

7 Nov – Herald- SQA is accused of ‘whitewash’:

“Once again, the SQA has shown how disconnected it is from what is happening in our schools.”

“After marking its own homework, the SQA has decided to try and blame pupils and teachers for what went wrong here.

“The SNP must take responsibility for the chaos surrounding the SQA and step in to get answers on what happened with this history paper.

“This is a clear reminder that a rebranding exercise is not enough to fix the systemic issues in our education system – the SNP must deliver the change needed before another generation of school children are let down.”

7 Nov - BBC 1 Scotland FMQ's - @1243 Extract from FMQ's on the Review of Higher History Attainment.

Pam Duncan-Glancy: Thank you, Presiding Officer. Yesterday, the SQA published its review into the collapse in Higher History attainment, saying that poor standard of learner performance accounts for the drop. So, after essentially marking their own homework, the SQA has said there was no problem, despite teachers and pupils saying otherwise. One teacher has said of this review, ‘it’s a gut punch, it makes liars out of all the teachers who were in that room’. The First Minister presided over an exams fiasco in 2020, that punished the poorest pupils, and here we have another one. So, can I ask the First Minister, how many more exams fiascos is he happy to oversee before he accepts that his government’s so-called reforms are nothing more than a rebrand?

7 Nov – [Tweet from Herald Writer JME mentioning PDG and Miles Briggs](#)

‘The SQA says it has investigated and nothing went wrong with Higher History. Teachers I’ve spoken to have been utterly scathing, [@GlasgowPam](#) says the SQA is trying to blame teachers and pupils, and [@Miles4Lothian](#) calls it a whitewash. What do you think?’

‘One faculty head has told me that, as a result of the actions of the SQA, they’re going to have to look at moving students away from studying history and towards modern studies / geography instead.’

6 Nov – [BBC - Poor pupil answers blamed for exam slump - review](#)

PDG said “Once again the SQA has shown how disconnected it is from what is happening in our schools.

“After marking its own homework, the SQA has decided to try and blame pupils and teachers for what went wrong here.”

6 Nov – Herald - SQA review concludes that Higher History marking standards did not Change:

Repeats Quote above and adds... “This is a clear reminder that a rebranding exercise is not enough to fix the systemic issues in our education system – the SNP must deliver the change needed before another generation of school children are let down.”

6 Nov - [Twitter Comment](#)

'Staggering that the SQA has blamed pupils and teachers for what went wrong. This is a clear reminder that a rebranding exercise is not enough to fix the systemic issues – the SNP must deliver the change needed before another generation of school children are let down.'

### **Miles Briggs - Con**

14 Nov - The questions over Higher History marking saga just won't stop coming:  
The Scottish Conservatives' education spokesperson talked about a "whitewash"

13 Nov - Herald - Swinney may have misled Holyrood on Higher exam Controversy:

Miles Briggs, who previously described the report as a "whitewash", insisted that the First Minister must "come clean on his knowledge of the situation engulfing the SQA".

He added: "Other authorities clearly believe that the SQA has marked its own homework and has avoided the thorough investigation that should have taken place.

"As a former education secretary, John Swinney must be upfront about what evidence there is to support what he said in Parliament. Otherwise, suspicions will continue to grow about this SNP quango, which is not fit for purpose."

9 Nov – Herald - SQA spoke only to 'senior appointees'

Miles Briggs MSP said the exam board seems "more interested in self-justification rather than attempting to address the serious concerns of teachers, parents and pupils".

He added: "The attempts by this SNP-backed quango to mark their own homework shows a superficial name change simply won't cut it.

The SQA needs systematic reform to ensure students will always be able to achieve the best possible outcomes."

7 Nov – Herald- SQA is accused of 'whitewash':

Miles Briggs said: "This 'nothing to see here' response from the SQA will do little to satisfy pupils, parents and teachers who have grave concerns over this year's Higher History exam.

"This apparent whitewash will do little to assuage suspicions that the SQA is marking its own homework and underlines the need for proper reform of this discredited quango, rather than just a superficial name change."

6 Nov – [BBC - Poor pupil answers blamed for exam slump - review](#)

Scottish Conservative education spokesman Miles Briggs said: "This 'nothing to see here' response from the SQA will do little to satisfy pupils, parents and teachers who have grave concerns over this year's Higher History exam.

"This apparent whitewash will do little to assuage suspicions that the SQA is marking its own homework and underlines the need for proper reform of this discredited quango, rather than just a superficial name change."

6 Nov – [Twitter Comment From Herald writer JME tagging Miles Briggs](#)

'Scottish Conservatives MSP [@Miles4Lothian](#) has added his voice, calling the report by the SQA an "apparent whitewash" that won't reassure pupils, parents or teachers.'

### **Ross Greer – Green**

6 Nov - [post on Twitter from Ross Greer](#) :

The SQA's Higher History review insists the process, paper & marking scheme were all sound and pupils just performed poorly. You would think our national qualifications body might then at least be curious as to why pupil performance apparently dropped but no, that's not covered.

**Willie Rennie – Lib**

Not mentioned Higher History on record since before 6 No