

**The Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner**

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OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Sir Chris Wormald KCB
Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service
Cabinet Office

17 June 2025

Dear Chris,

When we met in March you explained the vision and context behind the Prime Minister's announcement on reshaping the state, and asked us to consider how to apply a problem-solving mindset that would help the Civil Service recruit and promote the best skills and capabilities to deliver for UK citizens. This letter gives our response. The guiding principle is that we are an outcome-focused independent regulator with clear statutory duties and priorities, and should promote best practice and innovation to deliver better results. We have the requisite legislation and departmental buy-in to deliver this ambition. Cabinet Office, as our sponsor Department, understands our budget and resourcing needs and we are working hard to realise the opportunities presented by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Below we identify efforts that can be delivered quickly and efficiently in support of the government's priorities. The first group involves changes we will make as regulator to increase impact. The second group outlines improvements that the Civil Service itself can make, drawing on the deep working relationships between Government People Group (GPG) and the Commission. We are particularly keen to support the Government's test and learn initiatives both through pilots and by making our data more accessible.

Changes driven by the Commission:

1. **We will work to make more information available about best practice** in recruitment, for example on the use of AI, search and attracting specialist skills, and maximising usage of the unique data we have about recruitment at all grades. This will include work with GPG and a test and learn programme with Commissioner-chaired roles.
2. We will **encourage and work with GPG to promote the use of secondments** both into and out of the Civil Service by achieving greater clarity about how fixed-term appointments can be used, both to bring in entrepreneurial leaders, digital experts, and mission-driven professionals from outside government to tackle specific challenges, and to provide existing civil servants with wider experience.
3. We will, drawing on GPG's programme of work in this space, ensure that Departments' **criteria for selection in recruitment are significantly more specific and stretching and clearly aligned to government priorities**, particularly to get a

sharper focus on delivery skills, technology, value for money and a 'can do' approach.

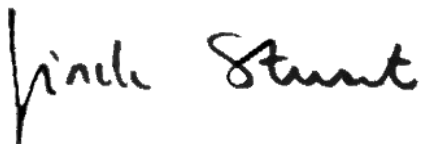
Changes driven by the Government:

4. We will work in partnership with GPG and the Professions to champion a systematic programme to **build relationships with potential candidates for key SCS roles and focus them on key skills development**. The current set-up misses an opportunity to guide existing civil servants on career progress and discourages external candidates who do not succeed in a first application. We will support GPG to maintain relationships and get better results, focused first in areas that require scarce delivery skills.
5. 36% of competitions last year were won by people recently put in a post on a temporary basis, without external competition. **We will work with the Civil Service to assess whether change is needed to the use of Temporary Promotions, in order to get the best people in post.**
6. We will help Government People Group make the case for a **campaign to improve the perception of Civil Service roles** in the job market, by better use of social media, and partnering with sector organisations, trade unions and think tanks.

We believe these steps will have a big impact - helping the Civil Service to appoint and promote on merit people who have the right skills to deliver for the public, and making it more agile, focused and effective in implementing government's priorities and delivering value.

We look forward to discussing these plans with you and will consider any other priorities or reforms that you and the Civil Service believe we should also address.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston

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