

1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Gareth Davies
Permanent Secretary
The Home Office

22 June 2026

Via email

Dear Permanent Secretary,

I am writing to you in relation to the involvement of Special Advisers in the recruitment process for the externally advertised appointment of a Director at the Home Office.

You will be aware that a Home Office internal investigation established that Special Advisers met with candidates during the interview process. These meetings constitute a breach of both the Recruitment Principles and the underpinning legislation, the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. I am satisfied that these meetings amount to a Fundamental Breach of the Recruitment Principles.

Paragraph 58 of the Recruitment Principles states that:

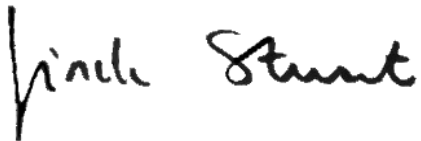
Under the [Constitutional Reform and Governance] 2010 Act, Special Advisers may not exercise any power in relation to the management of any part of the Civil Service. They may therefore not be involved in the recruitment of civil servants.

This breach will be recorded in the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts for 2026/27 and should also be included in the Home Office's Annual Report and Accounts for 2026/27.

I appreciate that Home Office officials brought this matter to the attention of the Civil Service Commission at the earliest opportunity and cooperated fully. In doing so they have fulfilled their obligations under the Civil Service Code. My expectation is that departments will always refer breaches to the Civil Service Commission as soon as they are identified. Your officials were also quick to initiate training of the relevant Special Advisers and officials involved, and to implement additional longer-term safeguards, to ensure that there is no recurrence.

I have asked the Civil Service Commission to carry out a targeted audit of relevant Home Office procedures later this year, and will be writing to all Permanent Secretaries to remind them of the restriction on the involvement of Special Advisers in Civil Service recruitment processes.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gisela Stuart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gisela Stuart

First Civil Service Commissioner