

Cabinet Office

26 February 2026

Unpaid appointment with The Whitehall and Industry Group: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Sir Alex Chisholm KCB, former Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office.

The Civil Service Commission (the Commission) has considered an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) from **Sir Alex Chisholm KCB**, formerly Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office. The application is for an unpaid, part-time role as a **Patron at The Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG)**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Sir Alex is a former civil servant at SCS Pay Band 4. His last day of service was 13 April 2024.

The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. They aim to avoid any reasonable concerns that: a civil servant may be influenced in their official duties by the risk of reward; a civil servant may improperly exploit access to information; and an organisation may gain an improper influence through the employment of a civil servant.

The Commission's advice¹ is that the appointment with WIG should be made subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Sir Alex should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in office.
2. Lobbying – For two years from his last day in office, until 13 April 2026, Sir Alex should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of WIG (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). He should also not use, directly or indirectly, his contacts in the government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage WIG (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).
3. Bids and contracts – For two years from his last day in the civil service, until 13

¹ See [Advice under the Business Appointment Rules](#) for details applying to all advice issued by the Civil Service Commission.

April 2026, Sir Alex should not provide advice to WIG on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

The Rules set out that civil servants must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Sir Alex's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment and to understand any other rules and regulations he may be subject to in parallel with the Commission's advice.

Sir Alex must seek advice if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. K. Owen." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Kate Owen
Chief Executive

Annex A: The application

Applicant assessment

1. According to its website, The Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG) is an independent, non-lobbying, UK-based charity and membership organisation that facilitates interaction between the public, private, and voluntary sectors. It operates as a cross-sector platform, providing leadership development programmes, secondments, and events designed to share organisational practices and policy insights among its members.
2. As a Patron, Sir Alex will be part of the advisory body providing the organisation with professional expertise and different sector perspectives to assist the Board of Trustees in its activities.
3. Sir Alex stated that he has been asked to attend at least one engagement a year where senior civil servants meet with senior business people to discuss a theme of common interest.
4. As Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office, Sir Alex was head of the department and Chief Accounting Officer for the Cabinet Office, while also serving as Chief Operating Officer for the UK Civil Service.
5. Sir Alex stated he was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting WIG at any time in his last two years in the civil service.

CSC analysis

6. *Application level.* As a Level 1 application for an unpaid role, the Commission's analysis applies the principle that this category of appointment is generally recognised as posing a lower risk to government integrity.
7. *Risk of reward.* The role as a Patron at WIG is unpaid. Sir Alex stated he had no involvement in policy development or contractual or commercial decisions affecting WIG while at the Cabinet Office. Therefore, the risk that the offer was made as a reward for decisions made during his time in office is low.
8. *Access to information.* As Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office, Sir Alex held one of the most central and influential roles within the civil service and would have been exposed to some privileged information about the government's legislative and policy programme. This risk is reduced by the time passed since leaving government service (almost two years ago). The standard privileged information ban mitigates any risks around his access.

9. *Improper influence.* Sir Alex will maintain a significant network of high-level contacts across government, that could be used to provide WIG an unfair advantage. The Commission noted that WIG is an independent charity and a long-standing stakeholder of the government, frequently facilitating forums where senior officials and business leaders engage on themes of common interest. While the Commission generally considers that a former senior official's presence at events attended by government colleagues could raise perception risks around lobbying, the nature of WIG as a non-lobbying membership organisation significantly limits the risk of improper influence. The standard lobbying and privileged information restrictions are therefore sufficient to mitigate the risks involved of improper influence.

10. *Waiting period.* As a former SCS Pay Band 4 official, Sir Alex is subject to a three month waiting period upon leaving government service in taking up any appointments. As Sir Alex left the civil service almost two years ago, this period has elapsed.