

Cabinet Office

10 August 2026

Unpaid appointment with the Young Women's Trust: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Ms Stephanie Driver, former Director of Communications at the Prime Minister's Office.

The Civil Service Commission (the Commission) has considered an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) from **Ms Stephanie Driver**, formerly Director of Communications at the Prime Minister's Office. The application is for an unpaid role as a **Trustee** at the **Young Women's Trust**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Ms Driver is a former special adviser at Special Adviser Pay Band 4. Her last day of service was 30 September 2025.

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 Rules state that advice must be sought before an appointment is accepted or announced. By announcing this role without prior advice, Ms Driver has acted in breach of these Rules. These conditions apply with immediate effect from the date of this letter.

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

1. Privileged information – Ms Driver should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to her from her time in the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 30 September 2027, Ms Driver should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of the Young Women's Trust (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). She should also not use, directly or indirectly, her contacts in the

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

government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage the Young Women's Trust (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 30 September 2027, Ms Driver should not provide advice to the Young Women's Trust on a bid or contract relating to the UK Government or its arm's length bodies.

The Rules set out that special advisers must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Ms Driver's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment and to understand any other rules and regulations she may be subject to in parallel with the Commission's advice.

Ms Driver must seek advice if she proposes to extend or otherwise change her 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

1. According to its website, the Young Women's Trust is a UK-based charity focused on helping young women aged 18 to 30 who live on low or no pay. The charity works to raise young women's incomes by tackling sexism and workplace discrimination. The charity offers direct support such as free professional coaching, personalised CV feedback, and career webinars. It also runs a research centre to analyse young women's employment, using findings for public campaigns and lobbying for structural change.

Applicant assessment

2. Ms Driver wishes to take up a role as a Trustee. In her role, she will be:
 - setting overall policy, strategic direction, and monitoring organisational performance;
 - ensuring full compliance with legal, financial, and safeguarding requirements;
 - reviewing budgets to protect resources and ensure long-term financial stability;
 - acting as an ambassador to raise the charity's profile and support fundraising; and
 - attending quarterly Board meetings and an annual away day to guide the executive team.
3. She stated that her role will not involve contact with, or lobbying of, government.
4. Ms Driver was the Director of Communications at the Prime Minister's Office between March and September 2025. This is the most senior political communications function within government. She was previously Deputy Director of Communications until March 2025.
5. Ms Driver stated she was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting the Young Women's Trust at any time in her last two years in the civil service.

The Commission's analysis

6. *Retrospective application.* The Commission notes that Ms Driver listed this appointment on her independent consultancy webpage² before submitting an application or receiving advice. Following correspondence with the Commission, Ms Driver subsequently retrospectively submitted her

² St Michael Advisory, 'Meet Us'
<https://stmichaeladvisory.co.uk/meet-us/>

application on 21 May 2026. The Commission has agreed to consider the application on this basis.

7. *Application level.* As a Level 1 application for an unpaid charitable trusteeship role, the Commission's analysis applies the principle that this category of appointment is generally recognised as posing a lower risk to government integrity.
8. *Risk of reward.* The role as a Trustee is unpaid. Ms Driver stated she was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting the Young Women's Trust. The risk that the offer was made as a reward for decisions made during her time in office is low.
9. *Access to information.* As former Director of Communications, Ms Driver would have had access to a range of policy information. This risk is mitigated by the fact that over nine months have passed since her last day in civil service, reducing the currency of any information she may still hold. The standard condition regarding privileged information covers any remaining risk.
10. *Improper influence.* As Director of Communications, Ms Driver would have a network of contacts in government that could provide an unfair advantage to the Young Women's Trust. She has stated there will be no contact with government in her proposed role. The risk of perceived lobbying to influence government policy is mitigated by the standard conditions.