



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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Alex Chisholm
Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office
Via email

17th April 2020

Dear Mr Chisholm,

Congratulations on your recent appointment. I look forward to meeting you in person, and to you appearing before the Committee to give formal evidence in due course.

I have seen the recent report on data handling in the Cabinet Office and welcome its recommendations. It is disappointing that the leak of Honours data was assigned to human error where better Cabinet Office practices could have reduced the risk, and it is concerning as this could undermine public trust in wider Civil Service data handling. I was disappointed to note that the report found a lack of leadership at Executive Committee level, inconsistent practices, and a culture where some teams were not clear on their responsibilities for data handling. However, it is welcome to see that Cabinet Office has engaged with this review and I note some positive findings such as the pockets of best practice from which the Department could learn.

The Cabinet Office needs to handle more data as it takes on its new role in security clearance and I would expect it lead by example within the Civil Service. I would be very grateful if you could write to me to briefly outline your timetable for implementing the recommendations of the report, when you have had time to consider this in your new role.

The Committee will, of course, call you to appear before the Committee at some point in the future and it will use that opportunity to follow up on progress.

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee