



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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By email only

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Office of the Prime Minister

Appearing before the House of Commons last week, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a new Office of the Prime Minister.¹ During the debate, in response to a question from the Member for Wallasey, Dame Angela Eagle MP, the Prime Minister referred to this new Office as the ‘Prime Minister’s department’.²

I would be grateful if you could confirm whether the new Office of the Prime Minister will be established as a distinct Government Department?

If it is to be a new Department, and in light of the answers you provided to the Committee on 20 January regarding your oversight for machinery of Government changes, I would be grateful if you could please explain the following points to the Committee:

- What will be the functional role of the department?
- What Cabinet Office functions will be absorbed by the new Department and how many staff will be involved?
- Given the Government’s response to the Committee’s report on the Role and Status of the Prime Minister’s Office suggested that “it would be difficult to comprehensively delineate which business units support the Cabinet and which business units support the Prime Minister”,³ what dedicated support will be provided for Cabinet, distinct from that provided for the Prime Minister, and in which Department will it be based?
- Whether the new Department will appoint a Board chaired by a senior minister to lead the Department in line with Section 1.5 of *Managing Public Money*,⁴ and if so, can you please outline what governance and accountability arrangements will be put in place?

¹ [HC Deb](#), 31 January 2022, c23

² [HC Deb](#), 31 January 2022, c29

³ [The role and status of the Prime Minister’s Office: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report](#)

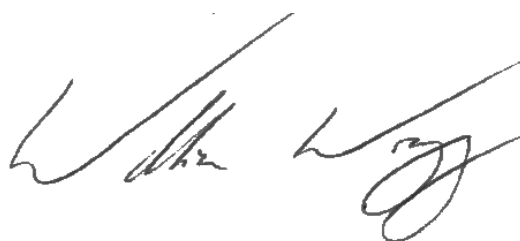
⁴ HM Treasury, [Managing Public Money](#), May 2021

- Whether the new Department will have a new Accounting Officer and when they can be expected to be in post?
- Whether the new Department will prepare accounts in line with Section 5 of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and whether, as is the case for other departments, it will therefore be subject to Section 6 of the National Audit Act 1983?
- When we can expect initial costs for the set up and running of this new Department and when will forecasts of the costs from these Machinery of Government changes be available?
- What the approximate headcount envisaged for the department and what is its proposed grade structure?
- Whether the new Department will provide a general right of access to information held by public authorities in line with Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000?
- Which Minister will be accountable for the new Department before the House of Commons, both in the Chamber and before Select Committees?

If this will not be constituted as a new Department, I would be grateful if you could clarify its status and what its relationship with the Cabinet Office will be.

I look forward to receiving your response to the above points on this subject matter by Friday 18th February 2022. I am placing a copy of this letter and your response in the public domain.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP; the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP; the Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case; Chair of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, Dame Meg Hillier MP; and the Comptroller and Auditor General at the National Audit Office, Gareth Davies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Wragg', written in a cursive style.

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee