

Special Advisers (SpAds)

10. Dramatically reduce the employment of Special Advisers (SpAds) in government

There is strong evidence to suggest that today's situation regarding the recruitment, training and supervision of SpAds is a complete mess and counter-productive to good government.

We will be undertaking further, detailed research into this issue prior to the next General Election with a view defining and publishing our firm proposals for improvement well in advance of the date of this election being announced.

Note

The UK's current system of representative parliamentary democracy functioned effectively in governing the largest empire in the history of the world without SpAds prior to their invention by Prime Minister Harold Wilson's government in 1964.

Today, the role of SpAds is essentially to:

- (a) bolster the image and reputation of the Ministers they serve in the eyes of the Party and the public at large; and
- (b) increase the chances of personal and political advancement for their Ministers – and all, unfortunately, at taxpayers' expense, rather than at the expense of political parties.

According to the "CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SPECIAL ADVISERS" (see <https://bit.ly/485ezZB>), the role of Special Advisers (SpAds) is to: "Add a political dimension to the advice and assistance available to Ministers while reinforcing the political impartiality of the permanent Civil Service by distinguishing the source of political advice and support." ~~However:~~

What is "a political dimension"? My Wiktionary says "political" is "concerning or relating to politics, the art and process of governing", which is what the permanent Civil Service are meant to be helping with. So perhaps SpAds are into the other kind of political: "(derogatory) motivated, especially inappropriately, by political (electoral; or, more generally, power, standing, influence or conflict) calculation". Which is not something which should be a public expense. And certainly not if it includes a hairdresser for the Prime Minister's wife.

Objective observers have noted that SpAds

- (a) are neither accountable to Parliament nor subject to the Civil Service Code;
- (b) cause conflicts of interest and a lack of transparency; and
- (c) add no value either to taxpayers or to the best interests of the country.

Also, they tend to be young, inexperienced and have no particular sectoral expertise to contribute.

One suspects that numerous SpAds having direct access to civil servants, and often conveing their interpretation of the minister's instructions, would tend to undermine the role of the Permanent Secretary, and indeed make his position untenable.

~~Moreover,~~ at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and Partygate scandal in 10 Downing Street, the incumbent Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, had appointed a total of 52 SpAds to serve them. ~~The names, pay grades and salary bands of these 52 SpAds are listed at Appendix B.]~~

Special Advisers (SpAds) employed by Downing Street during Covid-19 and Partygate

The Cabinet Office Annual Report on Special Advisers 2021 dated 15 Jul 21 (at <https://bit.ly/3KNmfqg>) shows that the incumbent Prime Minister (Boris Johnson) and the incumbent Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak) had collectively appointed a total of 52 SpAds at the taxpayers' expense to look after their personal and party-political interests – albeit none of these 52 SpAds had a job description, appropriate training or effective supervision.

Their names, pay grades and salary bands are listed below, as shown in the "List of Special Advisers" in the Cabinet Office Report on Pages 5-9:

Appointed by: The Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, Minister for the Union and Minister for the Civil Service - The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

Nikki Da Costa, 4, £125,000-£129,999	Meg Powell-Chandler, 3, £100,000-£104,999
Jack Doyle, 4, £140,000-£144,999	Jean-Andre Prager, 3, £70,000-£74,999 [*]
Simone Finn, 4, £125,000-£129,999	Sam Richards, 3, £70,000-£74,999
Alex Hickman, 4, £110,000-£114,999	Chloe Sarfaty, 3, £75,000-£79,999
Munira Mirza, 4, £140,000-£144,999	Rajiv Shah, 3, £70,000-£74,999
Dan Rosenfield, 4, £140,000-£144,999	Myles Stacey, 3, £70,000-£74,999
Jack Airey, 3, £70,000-£74,999	Will Warr, 3, £80,000-£84,999
Rosie Bate-Williams, 3, £90,000-£94,999	Sheridan Westlake, 3, £85,000-£89,999
John Bew, 3, £90,000-£94,999	Shelley Williams-Walker, 3, £75,000-£79,999
Henry Cook, 3, £100,000-£104,999	Joel Winton, 3, £90,000-£94,999
Rory Geoghegan, 3, £80,000-£84,999	Leonora Campbell, 2
Andrew Gilligan, 3, £95,000-£99,999	Danielle Dove, 2
Logan Graham, 3, £80,000-£84,999	Daniel El-Gamry, 2
Rory Gribbell, 3, £70,000-£74,999	Marcus Natale, 2
Jonathan Hellewell, 3, £75,000-£79,999	Sophia True, 2
Katharine Howell, 3, £85,000-£89,999	Christopher James, 1
Stephanie Lis, 3, £75,000-£79,999	Alex King, 1
Elena Narozanski, 3, £80,000-£84,999	Ed Oldfield, 1
Henry Newman, 3, £100,000-£104,999	Philip Peters, 1
Andrew Parsons, 3, £100,000-£104,999	Catherine Rostron, 1
James Phillips 3 £80,000-£84,999	Chloe Westley
Johnny Piper, 3, £70,000-£74,999	

[*Works part time – salary band is full time equivalent, Annual Report on Special Advisers 2021]

Sub-Total = 44

Appointed by: Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister (Joint No10/HMT Economic Unit) – The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP

Liam Booth-Smith, 4, £110,000-£114,999
Michael Webb, 4, £110,000-£114,999
Douglas McNeill, 3, £95,000-£99,999
Nerissa Chesterfield, 2
Cass Horowitz, 2
Rupert Yorke, 2, £70,000-£74,999

Sub-Total = 6

Appointed by: Chancellor of the Exchequer –The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP

James Nation, 2
Lisa Lovering (Part-time), 1

Sub-Total = 2

Grand Total = 52