# Chris McDonald MP - Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

(Labour, Stockton North)

* Elected in July 2024 for the constituency of Stockton North, replacing Alex Cunningham who stood down at the General Election after serving as the Labour MP for Stockton North from 2010 to 2024.
* McDonald serves as a Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) – an unpaid assistant to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, advising on the state of parliamentary or party opinion, and acting as a two way channel of communication between the Secretary of State and backbench MPs.
* Before he entered Parliament, McDonald was the Chief Executive Office of the Manufacturing Processing Institute (MPI).

# Politics

Since becoming an MP, McDonald has been appointed as a PPS in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

As a PPS, McDonald is an unpaid assistant to Ed Miliband MP in his role as Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, acting as his ‘eyes and ears’ in the House of Commons. In the role, McDonald will advise the Secretary of State on the state of parliamentary or party opinion, and act as a two way channel of communication between the Minister and backbench MPs. He is not a member of the Government, but is still restricted by the Ministerial Code. For example, he is expected to vote with the Government, and is unable to ask parliamentary questions of DESNZ in the House of Commons.

McDonald has been a vocal proponent of securing a clear and effective national Industrial Strategy, believing it is essential to driving both national and local economic growth, as well as fostering growth in the technology industry. He criticised the previous Government for not delivering a proper strategy, and praised the steps the new Government is taking as pro-industry ([link](https://hansard.parliament.uk/pdf/commons/2024-11-06)) ([link](https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24615719.mcdonald-mcevoy-lead-debate-echos-cummins-event/)). In an interview to a local paper upon election, McDonald said that his main political priorities were creating opportunities for young people and delivering an effective industrial strategy that will ensure strong economic growth and a green transition ([link](https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/health/new-labour-candidate-stockton-north-26406307)).

McDonald is a member of the APPG for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS), which aims to support the decarbonisation of heavy-industry, boost job creation, and achieve clean power by 2030 ([link](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/carboncaptureandstorageassociation_ccus-carboncapture-netzero-activity-7238946770523750400-YDkr?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop)).

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# Background

Chris McDonald is a chemical engineer and business executive with extensive experience in setting industrial policy. In 2014, he was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Materials Processing Institute (MPI), which specialises in commercialising technology in advanced materials, low-carbon energy, the circular economy, and digital technologies. He led the institute’s divestment from Tata Steel. During his tenure, he co-authored two reports, one examining industrial growth in the UK post-Brexit ([link](https://www.mpiuk.com/downloads/industry-papers/I-Series-Paper-01-Goodbye-EU-Hello-World-A-Vision-for-an-Innovation-Centred-Growth-Strategy-for-the-United-Kingdom.pdf)), and the other looking into the electric arc furnace and energy storage innovations ([link](https://www.mpiuk.com/downloads/industry-papers/SI-Series-Paper-03-EAF-Innovation-Addressing-the-Technology-Challenges.pdf)). He stepped down from this role after being formally selected as the Labour Party candidate for Stockton North in November 2023.

McDonald began his career working at British Steel, who sponsored him to read chemical engineering at the University of Cambridge. Following this, he worked in various roles in the steel industry, primarily focused on research. After leading the divestment of Tata Steel’s UK research and development centre in Grangetown, which became the MPI, McDonald subsequently launched the Institute's commercial steel-making operation from its facility on Teesside.