

# Cabinet Office

Coordinates: 51°30′13″N 0°7′36″W﻿ / ﻿

The **Cabinet Office** is a department of the UK Government responsible for supporting the prime minister and Cabinet.<sup>[3]</sup> It is composed of various units that support Cabinet committees and coordinate the delivery of government objectives via other departments. As of December 2021, it had over 10,200 staff, mostly civil servants, some of whom work in Whitehall. Staff working in the Prime Minister's Office are part of the Cabinet Office.

## Responsibilities

The Cabinet Office's core functions are:<sup>[4]</sup>

- Supporting collective government, helping to ensure the effective development, coordination, and implementation of policy;
- Supporting the National Security Council and the Joint Intelligence Organisation, coordinating the government's response to crises, and managing the UK's cyber security;
- Promoting efficiency and reform across government through innovation, transparency, better procurement, and project management, transforming the delivery of services, and improving the capability of the Civil Service;
- Political and constitutional reform

The Cabinet Office has responsibility for the following at the UK national level:

- the Home Civil Service
- the Boundary Commissions
- the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority
- the Government Commercial Function<sup>[5]</sup> and the Government Commercial Organisation.<sup>[6]</sup>
- the government's digital, data, and technology (DDaT) function is through the Government Digital Service<sup>[7]</sup>

UK Government *Procurement Policy Notes* are issued in the name of the Cabinet Office, although in the past they were issued by the Crown Commercial Service (CCS).<sup>[8]</sup> The CCS Helpdesk continues to act as the contact point for any queries.<sup>[9]</sup>

## History

### Cabinet Office



## Cabinet Office



70 Whitehall, Westminster

### Department overview

<b>Formed</b>	December 1916
<b>Preceding Department</b>	<u>Committee of Imperial Defence</u>
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<u>Government of the United Kingdom</u>
<b>Headquarters</b>	70 <u>Whitehall</u> , <u>London</u> , <u>England</u> <span><span><span><span><span>51°30′13″N</span> <span>0°7′36″W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span></span></span></span></span>
<b>Employees</b>	10,220 (As of December 2021) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Annual budget</b>	£2.1 billion (current) & £400 million (capital) for 2011–12 <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Ministers responsible</b>	<div>Rt Hon. <u>Rishi Sunak</u> MP, <u>Prime Minister</u></div> <div>Rt Hon. <u>Oliver Dowden</u> MP, <u>Deputy Prime Minister</u>, <u>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</u>, <u>Secretary of</u></div>

The department was formed in December 1916 from the secretariat of the Committee of Imperial Defence<sup>[10]</sup> under Sir Maurice Hankey, the first Cabinet Secretary.

Traditionally the most important part of the Cabinet Office's role was facilitating collective decision-making by the Cabinet, through running and supporting Cabinet-level committees. This is still its principal role, but since the absorption of some of the functions of the Civil Service Department in 1981 the Cabinet Office has also helped to ensure that a wide range of Ministerial priorities are taken forward across Whitehall.

It also contains miscellaneous units that do not sit well in other departments. For example:

- The Historical Section was founded in 1906 as part of the Committee for Imperial Defence and is concerned with Official Histories.<sup>[11]</sup>
- The Joint Intelligence Committee was founded in 1936 and transferred to the department in 1957. It deals with intelligence assessments and directing the national intelligence organisations of the UK.
- The Ceremonial Branch was founded in 1937 and transferred to the department in 1981. It was originally concerned with all ceremonial functions of state, but today it handles honours and appointments.

In modern times the Cabinet Office often takes on responsibility for areas of policy which are the priority of the Government of the time. The units that administer these areas migrate in and out of the Cabinet Office as government priorities (and governments) change.

## Ministers and civil servants

The Cabinet Office Ministers are as follows:<sup>[12]</sup>

	<u>State in the Cabinet Office</u> Rt Hon. <u>Jeremy</u> <u>Quin</u> MP, <u>Minister for the Cabinet Office</u> and <u>Paymaster General</u>
<b>Department executives</b>	<u>Simon Case</u> , <u>Cabinet Secretary</u> <u>Sir Alex Chisholm</u> , <u>Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary</u>
<b>Child agencies</b>	<u>Crown Commercial Service</u> <u>Government Equalities Office</u>
<b>Website</b>	<u>Cabinet Office</u> ( <u><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office</a></u> )

Minister	Rank	Portfolio
The Rt Hon. <u>Rishi Sunak</u> MP	<u>Prime Minister</u> <u>First Lord of the Treasury</u> <u>Minister for the Civil Service</u> <u>Minister for the Union</u>	<u>Head of government</u> ; oversees the operation of the Civil Service and government agencies; appoints members of the government; he is the principal government figure in the House of Commons.
The Rt Hon. <u>Oliver Dowden</u> MP	<u>Deputy Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Secretary of State in the Cabinet Office</u>	Driving delivery of Government's priorities including oversight of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, equalities including oversight of the Government Equalities Office, oversight of all Cabinet Office policy issues, the Union and intergovernmental relations, constitution, national security and cyber security, oversight of civil contingencies and resilience including COBR, oversight of Cabinet Office business planning, oversight of major events, including Bridges, oversight of borders and migration, oversight of honours, oversight of Cabinet Office's work on science, technology, and innovation, including oversight of the Office of Science and Technology Strategy.
The Rt Hon. <u>Jeremy Quin</u> MP	<u>Minister for the Cabinet Office</u> <u>Paymaster General</u>	Delivery of the Government's efficiency programme; Civil Service modernisation and reform; Places for Growth; Cabinet Office business planning and performance, including Cabinet Office 2025; oversight of the Crown Commercial Service; commercial models; Government Commercial Function; Central Digital and Data Office; Government Digital Service; Office of Government Property; Government Property Agency; Infrastructure and Projects Authority (jointly with HMT); Government Communications Service; Government Security Group; including United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV); Public Sector Fraud Authority; Civil Service HR; Propriety and Ethics; supporting Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on civil contingencies and resilience; including COBR; public appointments; Infected Blood inquiry sponsorship.
The Rt Hon. The Baroness <u>Neville-Rolfe</u> DBE CMG	<u>Minister of State at the Cabinet Office</u>	Cabinet Office business in the Lords; Procurement Bill; COVID-19 Commemoration; Transparency and Freedom of Information; Sponsorship of UK Statistics Authority and Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman; Geospatial Commission; Supporting the Minister for the Cabinet Office on the delivery of civil service efficiency and modernisation; Supporting the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on honours; Supporting the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on borders, including the Single Trade Window.
<u>Alex Burghart</u> MP	Parliamentary Secretary	Supporting the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in matters relating to the Constitution, the Union, and intergovernmental relations; Government inquiries – Infected Blood, Grenfell Tower, COVID-19; Procurement Bill; secondary legislation; support to Minister for the Cabinet Office on day-to-day management of the Government functions and Government Business Services.
The Rt Hon. <u>Johnny Mercer</u> MP	<u>Minister of State for Veterans Affairs</u>	Civilian and service personnel policy; armed forces pay, pensions and compensation; Armed Forces Covenant; welfare and service families; community engagement; equality, diversity and inclusion; veterans (including resettlement, transition, defence charities and Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board, and Office of Veteran Affairs); legacy issues and non-operational public inquiries and inquests; mental health; Defence Medical Services; the people programme (Flexible Engagement Strategy, Future Accommodation Model and Enterprise Approach); estates service family accommodation policy and engagement with welfare.
The Rt Hon. <u>Penny Mordaunt</u> MP	<u>Leader of the House of Commons</u> <u>Lord President of the Council</u>	The Government's Legislative Programme, chairing the Cabinet Committee; Managing and announcing the business of the House of Commons weekly and facilitating motions and debate in the Chamber, particularly on House business; Government's representative in the House (sitting on the House of Commons Commission, Public Accounts Commission, and the Speaker's Committees on the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority); House of Commons representative in Government; Parliamentary reform and policy; Ministerial responsibility for the Privy Council Office.
The Rt Hon. The Lord <u>True</u> CBE PC	<u>Leader of the House of Lords</u> <u>Lord Privy Seal</u>	Management and delivery of the Government's legislative programme (through the House of Lords) and facilitating the passage of individual bills; Leading the House (in the Chamber and as a key member of domestic committees to do with procedure, conduct, and the internal governance of

		the House); Issues connected to the House of Lords and its governance; Speaking for the Government in the Chamber on a range of issues, including repeating in the House of Lords statements made to the Commons by the Prime Minister; Ceremonial and other duties as the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal.
The Rt Hon. The Earl Howe GBE PC	<u>Deputy Leader of the House of Lords</u>	The Deputy Leader of the House of Lords supports the House of Lords in its job of questioning government ministers, improving legislation and debating topics of national significance.

The Cabinet Office senior civil servants are as follows:

Name	Position	Tenure
<u>Simon Case</u> CVO <sup>[13]</sup>	<u>Cabinet Secretary</u> and <u>Head of the Home Civil Service</u>	9 September 2020 – present
<u>Sir Alex Chisholm</u> KCB <sup>[14]</sup>	<u>Permanent Secretary</u> and Chief Executive of the Home Civil Service	14 April 2020 – present
<u>Sir Tim Barrow</u> GCMG LVO MBE <sup>[15]</sup>	National Security Adviser	7 September 2022 – present

The Cabinet Office also supports the work of:

- The Leader of the House of Commons
- The Leader of the House of Lords
- The Whips Office

The Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Cabinet Office supports the work of ministers.

## Committees

Cabinet committees have two key purposes:<sup>[16]</sup>

- To relieve the burden on the Cabinet by dealing with business that does not need to be discussed at full Cabinet. Appeals to the Cabinet should be infrequent, and Ministers chairing Cabinet Committees should exercise discretion in advising the prime minister whether to allow them.
- To support the principle of collective responsibility by ensuring that, even though a question may never reach the Cabinet itself, it will be fully considered. In this way, the final judgement is sufficiently authoritative that Government as a whole can be expected to accept responsibility for it. In this sense, Cabinet Committee decisions have the same authority as Cabinet decisions.

## Buildings

The main building of the Cabinet Office is at **70 Whitehall**, adjacent to Downing Street. The building connects three historically distinct properties, as well as the remains of Henry VIII's 1530 tennis courts, part of the Palace of Whitehall, which can be seen within the building. The Whitehall frontage was designed by Sir John Soane and completed by Sir Charles Barry between 1845 and 1847 as the Treasury Buildings. Immediately to the west Dorset House (1700) connects the front of the building to William Kent's Treasury (1733–36), which faces out

The entrance to the Cabinet Office.

onto Horse Guards Parade. The latter is built over the site of the Cockpit, used for cock fighting in the Tudor period, and subsequently as a theatre. In the early 1960s the buildings were restored and many of the Tudor remains were exposed and repaired. Significant renovations between 2010 and 2016 converted many of the floors to open plan and created new office space. The Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms are located on this site.

The department occupies other buildings in Whitehall and the surrounding area, including part of 1 Horse Guards, as well as sites in other parts of the country.

## See also

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- British Civil Service
- Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms
- Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
- Social Exclusion Task Force
- United Kingdom budget

## References

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6. Government Commercial Function, Government Commercial Organisation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-commercial-organisation>), published 5 June 2018, accessed 5 May 2019
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## External links

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- [Official website \(https://www.gov.uk/cabinetoffice\)](https://www.gov.uk/cabinetoffice)
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