



Cabinet Office

Annual Report on Special Advisers 2026

16 July 2026



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Present to Parliament pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 4 of section 16 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010

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Special Advisers

Special advisers are a critical part of the team supporting ministers. They 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.

Special advisers should be fully integrated into the functioning of government. They are part of the team working closely alongside civil servants to deliver ministers' priorities. They can help ministers on matters where the work of government and the work of the government party overlap and where it would be inappropriate for permanent civil servants to become involved. They are appointed to serve the Prime Minister and the Government as a whole, not just their appointing minister.

In accordance with section 16 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, the Cabinet Office publishes an annual report containing the number and costs of special advisers. This information is presented below and can be read alongside the Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts 2025-2026, which shall be published in due course.

The Cabinet Office also routinely publishes the names of all special advisers along with information on salaries and pay bands. In accordance with the approach taken by other government departments in balancing transparency with individuals' right to privacy, the salaries of those special advisers earning equivalent to senior civil servants (£81,000 and above) are given in bands of £5,000¹.

The information provided in this report relates to the 2025/26 financial year, from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026.

Number of Special Advisers

As at 31 March 2026, there were 159 (155 full-time equivalent) special advisers working across Government. The total Civil Service had 557,635 (523,635 full-time equivalent) civil servants as at March 2026². Special advisers represent 0.03 per cent of the Civil Service workforce (full time equivalent)³.

Cost of Special Advisers

The special adviser paybill for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 was £17.9 million. This includes

¹ The first band of published salaries is given as a range of £4,000 (£81,000-£84,999).

² Information taken from [Public Sector Employment Dataset March 2026](#), Office for National Statistics.

³ Based on information taken from [Public Sector Employment Dataset March 2026](#), Office for National Statistics.

£0.2 million paid in severance payments to special advisers, and a pay award of 3.25% for eligible special advisers. The pay award was in line with the headline award for the Senior Civil Service.

A special adviser's appointment automatically ends when their appointing minister ceases to hold the ministerial office in relation to which the adviser was appointed to assist, or if earlier, immediately following a parliamentary general election. In accordance with paragraph 18 of the Model Contract for Special Advisers, a special adviser is entitled to receive a severance payment in these circumstances. Special advisers who are subsequently reappointed are required to repay their severance as laid out in the Model Contract for Special Advisers.

	1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026	1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025
Salary Costs	£12.4m	£9.5m
National Insurance Contributions	£1.9m	£1.6m
Pension Contributions	£3.4m	£2.5m

Severance Costs	£0.2m	£3.1m
Total Pay Costs	£17.9m	£16.7m

Special Adviser Pay Policy

The Cabinet Office is responsible for Special Adviser Pay Policy. There are four pay bands for special advisers as set out below.

Pay Band 1 Junior Special Adviser - £47,525 to £57,459

Pay Band 2 Special Adviser - £64,850 to £91,067

Pay Band 3 Senior Special Adviser - £81,650 to £119,254

Pay Band 4 Special Adviser Leadership - £112,100 to £160,000

Each role is individually assessed and assigned a band according to the level and scope of responsibility required. Starting salaries are set within the relevant band reflecting the skill-set and expertise that an individual brings to the role.

Thorough benchmarking exercises are regularly carried out across the cohort to ensure the pay policy is being applied fairly and consistently. Salaries may be reviewed

where there has been a material change in responsibility, or where an individual has demonstrated increased experience and their pay has not otherwise changed in the preceding two years.

A probation period was introduced for new special advisers in December 2023, during which time their suitability for the role will be assessed. If a special adviser fails to meet the expected standards of conduct, attendance or performance, then their employment may be terminated during the probation period.

Special Advisers' Declarations of Interest

As with all civil servants, special advisers must ensure that no conflict arises, or could be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, financial or otherwise.

Special advisers declare interests to their Permanent Secretary in the appointing department for consideration, in line with the Declaration of Interests policy. The personal information which special advisers disclose to the Permanent Secretary is treated in confidence. All special advisers have submitted a completed declaration of interests form, including nil returns in instances where there was no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Where

relevant to the role, and to help manage a perception of conflict or to explain how a conflict is being managed, interests will be published on an annual basis in, or alongside, the relevant departmental Annual Report and Accounts. This provides a balance between transparency and privacy.

The declared interests of all those employed in the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 have been considered for publication, including those who have since left their department.

List of Special Advisers

This list reflects the special advisers in post as of 31 March 2026, working across the whole of government.

Appointing Minister	Special Adviser	Pay Band	Salary Band (if £81,000 or above)
The Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, Minister for the Civil Service, Minister for the Union – The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP	Vidhya Alakeson ⁴	4	£155,000-£159,999
	Varun Chandra	4	£150,000-£154,999
	Jill Cuthbertson ⁴	4	£155,000-£159,999
	Stuart Ingham	4	£150,000-£154,999
	Sophie Nazemi ⁴	4	£150,000-£154,999
	Jonathan Powell	4	£150,000-£154,999
	Harvey Redgrave	4	£135,000-£139,999
	Elizabeth Robinson ⁴	4	£135,000-£139,999
	Isabel Abbs	3	£90,000-£94,999

⁴ Salary temporarily uplifted

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	Matt Cavanagh	3	£110,000-£114,999
	Graeme Cooke	3	£115,000-£119,999
	Lidia Fanzo	3	£85,000-£89,999
	Shu Fei Grindlay	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Dilwar Hussein ⁵	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Amelia Impey	3	£85,000-£89,999
	Balshen Izzet	3	£115,000-£119,999
	Joy Johnston	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Jason Keen	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Toby Lloyd	3	£105,000-£109,999
	Alan Lockey	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Charlotte Malton	3	£105,000-£109,999
	George Mason ⁶	3	£95,000-£99,999

⁵ Works part time - the salary band shown represents the full time equivalent, the actual salary is prorated

⁶ Salary temporarily uplifted

	Calum Masters	3	£85,000-£89,999
	Michelle Napchan	3	£105,000-£109,999
	Tom Price	3	£115,000-£119,999
	Leo Rees	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Amy Richards ⁷	3	£110,000-£114,999
	Pete Robbins ⁷	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Caitlin Roper	3	£110,000-£114,999
	Alexander Roycroft	3	£85,000-£89,999
	Yasmeen Sebbana ⁸	3	£85,000-£89,999
	Rachel Statham	3	£95,000-£99,999
	John Stevens	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Claire Stewart ⁷	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Jessica Studdert	3	£105,000-£109,999

⁷ Works part time - the salary band shown represents the full time equivalent, the actual salary is prorated

⁸ Temporary appointment

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	Kate Webb	3	£90,000-£94,999
	John Bachelor	2	
	Joshua Byrne ⁹	2	
	James Carroll	2	
	Lucien Clinch	2	
	Joseph Cox	2	
	Bella Ford	2	
	Tommy Gale	2	
	Jessica George ¹⁰	2	
	Laura Greatrex	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Prentice Hazell ¹¹	2	
	Tom Hourigan	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Matt Langford	2	
	Abigail Martin	2	
	Anna Ryder ¹¹	2	
	Henna Shah	2	£85,000-£89,999

⁹ Temporary appointment.

¹⁰ Temporarily works part time as at 31 March 2026.

¹¹ Works part time.

	Jack Slater	2	
	Tessa Tyler Todd	2	
	Louis Holliday ¹²	1	
Deputy Prime Minister; Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice	William Heilpern	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Sophie Davis	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Michael Devlin	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Ffion Meagher	2	
	David Mills	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Georgia Henderson	1	
Chancellor of the Exchequer - The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP	Benjamin Nunn	4	£115,000-£119,999
	Neil Amin-Smith ¹³	3	£105,000-£109,999
	Neil Foster	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Emily Fry ¹³	3	£90,000-£94,999

¹² Temporary appointment

¹³ The special advisers are part of the Council of Economic Advisers.

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	Phoebe Plomer	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Rhodri Thomas	3	£105,000-£109,999
	Spencer Thompson ¹⁴	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Ed Lawrence	1	
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs – The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP	Natasha McDonagh Collett	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Jessica Leigh	2	
	Damian McBride	2	
	Thomas Raines	2	
	Callum Tipple	2	
Secretary of State for the Home Department – The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP	Sophie Linden	3	£115,000-119,999
	Joshua Williams	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Keir Cozens	2	
	Poppy Terry	2	
	Jamie Williams	2	
Secretary of State for Work	Tamara Cohen	3	£105,000-£109,999

¹⁴ The special advisers are part of the Council of Economic Advisers.

and Pensions - The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP	Alaina MacDonald	3	£95,000-£99,999
	James Kilmartin	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Morgan Wild	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Eve Navias	1	
Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster - The Rt Hon Darren Jones MP	Felicity Slater	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Lulu Freemont	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Adam Ludlow	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Callum Munro	2	
	Daniel Walsh	2	
Secretary of State for Defence - The Rt Hon John Healey MP	Daniel Harris	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Daniel Coyne	2	
	Thomas Hughes	2	
	Rachel Smethers	2	

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	Georgina Smith	2	
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care – The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP	Sarah Harrison	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Sam Forster ¹⁵	2	
	Thomas Gardiner	2	
	Heather Iqbal	2	
	Kirsty O'Brien	2	
	Will Prescott	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Edward Jones	1	
Secretary of State for Education; Minister for Women and Equalities – The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP	Owain Mumford	2	
	Rosy Roche	2	
	Vicky Salt	2	
	Tim Waters	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Ben Fazakerley	1	
Secretary of State for	Tobias Garnett	3	£90,000-£94,999

¹⁵ Temporary appointment.

Energy Security and Net Zero – The Rt Ed Miliband MP	Tim Bliss	2	
	Jonty Leibowitz	2	
	Oliver Nicholson	2	
	Eleanor Salter ¹⁶	2	
	Grace Pritchard	1	
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government - The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP	Elizabeth Bates	3	£105,000-109,999
	Joe Corry-Roake	2	
	Oliver Longworth	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Joseph Knight	2	
	Kate Robson	2	
	Eve Mason ¹⁷	1	
Secretary of State for Business and Trade, President of the Board of	Darren Murphy	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Charlie Atkins	2	
	Nicola Bartlett	2	

¹⁶ Works 50% time for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Rt Ed Milliband MP and 50% time for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs the Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP and so therefore appears in this list under both ministers.

¹⁷ Temporarily works part time as at 31 March 2026.

Trade – The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP	William French	2	
	Rebecca Hughes	1	
Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology – The Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP	Matt Bevington	3	£95,000-£99,999
	Rebecca Bailey	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Jason Beattie	2	£90,000-£94,999
	Nicola Heaton ¹⁸	2	
	Kirsty Innes	2	£90,000-£94,999
Secretary of State for Transport – The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP	Tom Whitney	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Ryan Denston	2	
	Tom Layfield	2	
	Stefanie Lehmann	2	£85,000-£89,999
	Eleri Kirkpatrick-Lorente	1	
Secretary of State for	Sophia Kewell	3	£90,000-£94,999

¹⁸ Temporary appointment.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – The Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP	Eleanor Salter ¹⁹	2	
	George Sanderson	2	
	Ben Szreter	2	
	David Vickers	1	
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport – The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP	Owen Alun-John	2	
	Griffin Mosson	2	
	Harjeet Sahota	2	
	Jane Eagles	1	
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland - The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP	Francis Grove-White	2	
	Claire Tighe	2	
Secretary of State for Scotland – The Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP	Amelia Tighe ²⁰	2	

¹⁹ Works 50% time for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Rt Ed Milliband MP and 50% time for the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs the Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP and so therefore appears in this list under both ministers.

²⁰ Temporarily works part time as at 31 March 2026.

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Secretary of State for Wales – The Rt Hon Jo Stevens MP	Rhys Clyne	2	
	Matthew Hexter	2	
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Chief Whip) – The Rt Jonathan Reynolds MP	Jack Glynn	3	£81,000-£84,999
	Megan McCann	2	
	Tom Marsland	2	
Lord Privy Seal; Leader of the House of Lords - The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Basildon	Ian Parker	3	£90,000-£94,999
	Ben Coffman	2	
	Clare Scally	2	
	Dan Stevens	2	
Lord President of the Council; Leader of the House of Commons –The Rt Hon Sir Alan Campbell MP	Simon Puddick	2	
	Grace Wright	2	

Chief Secretary to the Treasury – The Rt Hon James Murray MP	Shadi Brazell	2	£85,000-£89,999
Attorney General – The Rt Hon Lord Hermer KC	Richard Brooks	2	
	Rebecca Lewis	1	
Paymaster General, Minister for the Cabinet Office (Minister for the Constitution and European Union Relations) – The Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP	Maria Herron	2	
	Robert Keenan	2	

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