



MODEL CONTRACT FOR SPECIAL ADVISERS

**Cabinet Office
July 2026**

CONTRACT FOR SPECIAL ADVISERS SELECTED FOR APPOINTMENT BY UK MINISTERS

This document sets out your principal terms and conditions of employment. It incorporates the written particulars required by the *Employment Rights Act 1996* and, together with the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers*, the *Civil Service Code* and any contractual parts of the Special Advisers intranet as amended from time to time, constitutes your contract of employment with the Crown.

Names of Parties

[.....] (the Employee)

[Name of appointing minister], as the appointing authority for the Crown.

1. Commencement of employment

Your employment will begin on [.....].

2. Job title and duties

2a. You are appointed in accordance with section 15 of the *Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010* as a special adviser to assist [name of appointing minister], in [the Department], the Prime Minister, and the Government as a whole.

2b. You will carry out your duties in accordance with the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers* which is in force at the time. The Code also includes a description of the role of special advisers.

3. Handbook

Further details of relevant policies in relation to your terms and conditions are set out in the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers* and on the Special Advisers intranet, and are available from the Propriety and Ethics Team.

4. Salary

4a. Your salary is £[.....] a year within special adviser grade [number]. You will be paid monthly in arrears by credit transfer to your bank or building society.

4b. Any increase in your salary will be determined by the Special Adviser People Board, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Special Adviser Pay Policy. Your salary will be reviewed annually.

5. Performance management and appraisal

Your employment requires a consistently high standard of performance. Your performance will be subject to regular appraisal and review, with an opportunity to

discuss that performance with [name of appointing minister] and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff.

6. Probation and security clearance

6a. The first 4 months of your appointment will be a probationary period.

6b. Your appointment will be confirmed at the end of this period provided that you have shown you can meet the required standards of your role, and your conduct and attendance have been satisfactory. During the probationary period, your performance and suitability for continued employment will be monitored.

6c. Your appointment may be terminated at any time during the probationary period, with 5 weeks' notice. If you do not meet the required standards, your appointment will normally be terminated. In exceptional circumstances, your probationary period may be extended.

6d. Your ongoing employment is conditional upon you receiving [level of security clearance] level security clearance within 4 months of the commencement of your appointment, or within any other such longer period as may be notified to you.

6e. If you do not receive the required security clearance for any reason within 4 months of the commencement of your appointment, or other such period as is notified to you as above, your employment may be terminated with 5 weeks' written notice.

7. Hours of work

[EITHER]

7a. You are required to work a minimum (over a 5 day week) of 37 hours, excluding breaks.

[OR if part time]

7a. You are required to work a minimum of [...] hours a week, excluding breaks.

7b. You will be required to work such additional hours as may from time to time be reasonable and necessary for the efficient performance of your duties.

7c. You are not entitled to the payment of any overtime.

8. Annual leave

8a. Your annual leave allowance is 25 days, with one additional day accrued per year of service, up to a maximum of 30 days. Further details are set out in the attached Schedule 1.

[OR if part time]

8a. Your annual leave allowance is [...] days, with [...] additional days accrued per year of service, up to a maximum of [...] days. Further details are set out in the attached Schedule 1.

8b. Your leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August.

8c. When you leave the Civil Service, you may be required to use any remaining holiday entitlement during any notice period. Alternatively, where this is not possible, you will be able to claim payment on a pro rata basis for any accrued but untaken leave from that year's annual leave entitlement. In addition, and if appropriate, you may also claim payment for up to 10 days' unused holiday permitted to be carried over from the previous year.

9. Public and privilege holidays

Subject to the detailed rules in the Special Adviser Leave Policy, you are entitled to all public holidays and to one privilege day in addition to your annual leave allowance and you will be paid for each day. Further details are set out in the attached Schedule 1.

10. Sickness

The rules relating to sickness and injury are to be found in the Special Adviser Sickness Absence Policy. These provide for absence on full pay and on half pay, depending on the length of absence and subject to a ceiling on total paid absence within a given period.

11. Pensions

11a. As a civil servant you are eligible to be a member of the Civil Service pension arrangements. If you were a civil servant up to the date of this appointment then your existing pension arrangement will continue. If you are new to the Civil Service, or are re-joining the Civil Service, then your pension arrangements will be as set out in your letter of appointment.

11b. You can find information about the pension arrangements on the Civil Service Pensions website <http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk> or you can speak to the pensions administrators who are Capita.

11c. Irrespective of whether you join the Civil Service pension arrangements or opt out, you will be covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Injury Benefit Scheme in the event that your death or an impairment of earning capacity results from a qualifying injury.

11d. You will not be covered during your appointment as a special adviser by the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, irrespective of whether you join the Civil Service pension arrangements or opt out.

11e. Ill health retirement: in the event that you join the Civil Service pension arrangements and your health subsequently becomes such that our medical adviser agrees that you should be medically retired, you will be entitled to the ill health

retirement benefits provided by the relevant pension arrangement. For this purpose, you will be treated as serving for a fixed term, expiring at the latest date at which the Administration that appointed you must end.

12. Maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental and parental leave

Entitlements to maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave and pay, and to unpaid parental leave, are set out in the policies for special advisers, which details the qualifying conditions for such leave and the manner in which it may be taken.

13. Special leave

Details of provision for special leave are set out in the Special Adviser Leave Policy.

14. Place of work

Your current place of employment is [.....] but you may be required to work at any place which is within reasonable daily travelling distance of your home.

15. Training

During your employment:

- i. you must complete all mandatory training required by your department, which will be paid for. Further details of this training are set out on the intranet of your host department and the Civil Service learning platform; and
- ii. you are entitled to take part in various training courses which we may provide from time to time in-house. Specific details of what courses might be available can be found on the Civil Service learning platform.

16. Benefits

You are not entitled to any other benefits during your employment.

17. Notice and termination

17a. Because of the power of the Crown to dismiss at will, you are not entitled to a period of notice terminating your employment. Given the terms of the *Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (2010)*, you will be dismissed if the Prime Minister withdraws his consent, or the minister who selected you for appointment no longer wishes you to continue in the role. However, unless your employment is terminated (i) by agreement, (ii) in accordance with paragraph 17b below, or (iii) on grounds justifying summary dismissal at common law, you will normally be given not less than 3 months' notice in writing terminating your employment. On the expiry of such notice, your employment will terminate.

17b. Your employment will automatically terminate without notice not later than:

- i. when [name of appointing minister] ceases to hold the ministerial office in relation to which you were appointed to assist him/her; or
- ii. if earlier, at the end of the day after the day of the UK parliamentary general election following your appointment; or
- iii. if earlier (except, in either of the dates in this paragraph 17b(iii) where you have the express agreement of your appointing minister and the Prime Minister to continue in post):
 - a. on the first day of the Pre-Election Period immediately prior to a UK general election; or
 - b. if it is agreed that your appointment can continue beyond the start of the Pre-Election Period until the dissolution of Parliament, on the dissolution of Parliament prior to a UK general election.

17c. You may terminate your employment by giving not less than 5 weeks' notice in writing to your appointing minister and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff.

17d. If your employment is terminated in circumstances other than those set out in paragraph 17b i, ii or iii, then we may, in our sole and absolute discretion, make a payment in lieu of notice. This will be equal to the basic salary (as at the date of termination) which you would have been entitled to receive during the notice period or, if notice has already been given, during the remainder of the notice period, less tax and National Insurance contributions.

18. Severance

18a. If your employment automatically terminates in any of the circumstances set out in paragraph 17b i, ii or iii, you are entitled to a severance payment calculated in accordance with paragraph 18c. This is subject to your agreement that should you be reappointed as a special adviser you will repay your severance pay less the amount of salary you would have been paid had you been employed during the period between the termination of your previous contract and your re-appointment on a fresh contract.

18b. Special advisers who have been publicly identified as a candidate or prospective candidate for election to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, or the Northern Ireland Assembly must resign at the start of the short campaign period ahead of the election. Special advisers who resign in these circumstances are not entitled to receive a severance payment.

18c. Severance pay will be calculated as follows:

[EITHER]

If termination occurs at any time during the first year of service, you will receive three months' pay. You will receive a month's pay for each additional completed year of service after the first year, subject to an overall maximum of six months' pay. If you have been re-appointed as soon as practicable following an earlier appointment then any service accrued in your previous appointment(s) will be included in the calculation.

[OR, if employed less than 6 months ahead of a UK general election]

Since a UK general election has to take place within the next 6 months you will not be entitled to any severance pay (unless you are covered by the circumstances applicable on re-appointment as set out in paragraph 18a).

But if [name of appointing minister] ceases to hold the ministerial office in relation to which you were appointed to assist him/her before the dissolution of Parliament prior to the general election, you will receive severance pay equivalent to the amount of salary you would have been paid had you been employed up to the dissolution of Parliament, subject to a maximum of 3 months' pay.

18d. Any severance payment made under paragraph 18a is non-pensionable.

19. Conduct and Confidentiality

19a. You are a servant of the Crown and you owe duties of confidentiality and loyal service to the Crown. You are required to exercise care in the use of information acquired in the course of your official duties and to protect information which is held in confidence. An account of the constitutional position and the rules governing confidentiality and the use of official information is set out in the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers* and on the intranets of both the Cabinet Office and your host department. You are also subject to the *Official Secrets Act 1989*.

19b. You are required to abide by the conduct provisions of the Departmental Staff Handbook, including those relating to the acceptance of gifts or hospitality. Provisions relating to declaration of interests are set out in a separate policy for special advisers. The rules which apply to you relating to involvement in political activities are set out in the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers*.

19c. You are required to conduct yourself in accordance with the provisions of the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers* and the *Civil Service Code*, except for those aspects which relate to the impartiality and objectivity of the Civil Service and of civil servants. Copies of both Codes have been provided to you.

19d. If you wish to take part in any outside activity where information or experience gained in the course of your work is likely to be relevant, you must first seek permission from your appointing minister, the Head of the Department where you work, and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff.

19e. You must comply with the rules on the publication of personal memoirs and books based on official experience set out in the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers* and the *Civil Service Management Code*. You must not publish or broadcast personal memoirs reflecting your experience in government, or enter into commitments to do so, while in Crown employment. After leaving Crown employment, the permission of the Cabinet Secretary must be obtained before publishing any such memoirs or books. You must submit any draft manuscripts for comment to the Cabinet Secretary in good time in advance of publication.

19f. Special adviser positions are designated as sensitive posts within departments. As a condition of taking up such a post, you will be taken to have assigned to the

Crown copyright in any future work which relates to your employment and/or which contains or relies upon official information which came into your possession by virtue of your employment as a special adviser. Where permission to publish the work (or parts of it) is provided by the Head of the Department and the Cabinet Secretary, the Crown will reassign copyright in the relevant part of the work. Detailed rules are set out in section 4.2 of the *Civil Service Management Code* and on the intranets of both the Cabinet Office and your host department.

20. Disciplinary and grievance procedures

20a. Disciplinary matters are dealt with in accordance with procedures which are set out in the Special Adviser Discipline Policy. The responsibility for disciplinary matters rests with your appointing minister and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff. The inefficiency policies set out in the Cabinet Office policies do not apply to you.

20b. If you have any grievances relating to your employment, or if you wish to appeal against any decisions or actions which affect you adversely, you must bring this to the attention of [name of appointing minister], the Permanent Secretary, and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff in writing.

21. Acceptance of outside appointments

21a. Special advisers are subject to the *Business Appointment Rules for Civil Servants*. Under the Rules, they are required to submit an application to the Head of their former Department for any new appointments or employment they wish to take up after leaving the Civil Service. This requirement applies to special advisers of equivalent standing to the Senior Civil Service for two years after leaving the Civil Service, and to other special advisers for one year.

21b. Applications from special advisers of equivalent standing to Director General and above are referred to the *Civil Service Commission*. Decisions on these applications are taken by the former Head of Department based on the Commission's advice. The target timescale for completion of this process is 20 working days. Applications from other special advisers are handled within the relevant former Department, and the Head of the former Department makes the decision on the application. A special adviser who is unhappy with the decision on their application may appeal to the Lead Non- Executive Director of their former Department. In the case of special advisers of equivalent standing to Director General and above, the Commission's advice, and the decision of the Head of the former Department, will be published. The full *Business Appointment Rules for Civil Servants* are appended to the *Code of Conduct for Special Advisers*.

22. Collective Bargaining

Your terms of employment will be in accordance with collective agreements entered into with the trade unions recognised in respect of special advisers from time to time. When changes to terms of employment are agreed through collective bargaining those changes are automatically incorporated into your contract. You will be notified of any such changes through correspondence or notices on the Special Advisers intranet.

23. Statutory Particulars

The further particulars of terms of employment not contained in the body of this contract which must be given to you in compliance with Part 1 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996* are given in the attached Schedule 1.

Signed
(Employee)

Signed
(On behalf of [Department])

Date

Date.....

SCHEDULE 1

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 1996 - PART 1

The following information is given to supplement the information given in the body of the contract in order to comply with the requirements of Part 1 of the Act.

Continuous employment

Your period of continuous employment began on [.....].

Annual leave

You will be entitled to 25 days annual leave plus one additional day accrued as per the table below:

Length of Service	Annual leave entitlement
Up to 1 year	25 days
1 year - up to 2 years	26 days
2 years - up to 3 years	27 days
3 years - up to 4 years	28 days
4 years - up to 5 years	29 days
5 years or more	30 days

Public and privilege holidays

There is one privilege day for the King's Birthday holiday (i.e. either the Friday preceding, or the Tuesday after, the Spring Bank Holiday).

You may be required to work on a public holiday or privilege day. If so, you are entitled to time off in lieu.