



Sir Mark Sedwill
Cabinet Secretary
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
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25 October 2018

Dear Sir Mark

Civil Service Employment Relations

Firstly can we congratulate you on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service.

As result of the Judicial Review and the information disclosed in the government's grounds of resistance and related papers, it is imperative that we have an urgent meeting with you.

It is now clear that the Cabinet Office had no intention of consulting the Unions in any meaningful way about the 2018 pay remit guidance, despite assurances that are not disputed, that there would be a "number of meetings over a number of months" and that the Cabinet Office was committed to "positive and open engagement on the guidance".

We now know that prior to the meeting with the unions on the 29th March that:

- On the 22nd of February there was a meeting of the Civil Service Executive where the Cabinet Office put forward a suggested pay range for the proposed remit guidance of 1-2%. It is asserted that, at that meeting, officials from departments raised concerns and that there was "consensus" that the range should be reduced to "1-1.5%";
- On the 28th of February at the Heads of Department meeting, this approach was ratified;
- The suggested range of 1-1.5% was signed off by the CST and Minister for Implementation at the Cabinet Office days before the meeting with the unions on the 29th March;
- Despite assurances given to the unions of a number of meetings over a number of months, we now have sight of emails from officials who were at the meeting on 29th March who gave these assurances indicating that the actual intention was to publish the remit guidance between mid- April and early May.

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Latest revision of this document: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2018/01874>

This revision: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/id/2018/01874/2018-10-26>

The documents have also made clear that in agreeing to the range of 1%-1.5%. Ministers were advised that:

- Civil service pay levels were below both the private and wider public sector;
- There would be an expectation from staff of higher awards given the public statements from ministers;
- That the pay increases would in all likelihood be the lowest in the public sector;
- There would potentially be industrial action as a result and that the decision would go down badly with unions.

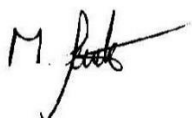
Despite all of this, seeking additional funding from the Treasury was ruled out. In one extraordinary paragraph of the advice to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the low levels of increase is viewed as a convenient way to "manage down expectations" of other pay review bodies.

Throughout all of our engagement this information was never provided. It took concerted legal action to actually find out what was going on. It is clear that through omission and commission that we have been misled. This matter goes to the heart of the notion of trust and confidence. It is also now clear that whatever the expectations at a central level, departmental negotiations have also been a sham with departments rushing almost meaningless consultation to impose the 1.5% cap.

Whatever our differences, we have always sought to engage positively on behalf of members even in the face of the most difficult of circumstances. However, such engagement is only possible where there is a level of trust and confidence. That trust and confidence has been destroyed by the behaviours of the Cabinet Office over the pay remit guidance. The behaviours demonstrated would not be acceptable in the private sector and the civil service is the only area of the public sector where such an approach is adopted. Government should be an exemplar of good practise not bad.

The purpose in asking to meet you urgently is to explore what the Cabinet Office intend to do to restore trust and for us to explain why we are of the view that a fundamental shift in behaviours is needed. We look forward to your early response via the Prospect General Secretary's Head of Office cora.green@prospect.org.uk .

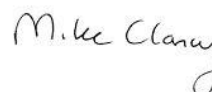
Yours sincerely



Mark Serwotka
PCS General Secretary



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