**Inside Government:**

# Who's who?

October 2024

An overview of

# Starmer's operation.

**This report looks at the new make-up of the Special Adviser teams across No. 10 and throughout government departments.**

We give you an insight on who the most important people behind the black door of Number 10 are and who to be aware of across departments in Whitehall.

These are the key advisers working to deliver the Government's ambitions and maintain Labour's majority.

The No. 10 structure is split into the Political Department, the Communications Department and the Policy Unit.

# Number 10 is the beating heart of the government apparatus.

# Inside
# Number 10.

## Political Department

## Comms Department

## Policy Unit

**Sir Keir Starmer KC MP**
Prime Minister

**Matthew Doyle**
Director of Communications

**Jill Cuthbertson**
Deputy Chief of Staff

**Paul Ovenden**
Director of Political Strategy

**Claire Reynolds**
Political Director

**Stuart Ingham**
Head of Policy

**Henna Shah**
Director of Party Relations

**Vidhya Alakeson**
Deputy Chief of Staff

**Claire Stewart**
Director of Trade Union Relations

**Morgan McSweeney**
Chief of Staff

**Varun Chandra**
Business Adviser

**James Lyons**
Director of Strategic Comms

**Sophie Nazemi**
Press Secretary

**Tom Lillywhite**
Director of Digital

**Caitlin Roper**
Head of Digital Content

**Callum Masters**
Head of Broadcast

**Alan Lockey**
Speechwriter

**George Mason**
Press Officer

**Lidia Fanzo**
Head of Print

**Rav Athwal**
Head of Economic Policy

**Harvey Redgrave**
Policy Special Adviser (Home Affairs)

**Carys Roberts**
Policy Special Adviser (Energy, Environment and Climate)

**Rachel Statham**
Policy Special Adviser (Education, Early Years and Childcare)

**Nick Williams**
Policy Special Adviser (Infrastructure, Housing and Transport)

**Laura Hickey**
Policy Special Adviser (Foreign Affairs)

**Muneer Lula**
Policy Special Adviser (Culture)

**Tom Webb**
Policy Special Adviser (Health and Public Services)

**Isabel Abbs**
Policy Special Adviser (Devolution)

# Number 10.

## Morgan McSweeney
### Chief of Staff

Morgan McSweeney is the most senior appointee in No.10, overseeing and managing Downing Street political staff and the work of Special Advisers across government.

He is one of the Prime Minister's longest serving advisers, having carried out this same role whilst in opposition. He played an essential role in bringing the Labour Party back to the centre.

McSweeney is tasked with ensuring the government machine delivers the Prime Minister's agenda by working with private secretaries across departments and working closely with ministers.

## Vidhya Alakeson
### Deputy Chief of Staff

Vidhya Alakeson, is one of two Deputy Chiefs of Staff. Prior to the election, she worked as Director of External Relations, and in this role, she was widely praised for improving relations between business and the Labour Party.

Alakeson has held a number of other senior roles, as Chief Executive of various charities, where she played a crucial role in research and policy development to improve living standards for low- to middle-income families.

She has also worked in the US Department of Health and Human Services and as a Senior Policy Adviser at HM Treasury.

## Jill Cuthbertson
### Deputy Chief of Staff

Jill Cuthbertson is one of two Deputy Chiefs of Staff. Cuthbertson has been described as the "ultimate gatekeeper to the new Prime Minister".

She will be managing the diary of the Prime Minister and planning his engagements. She will ultimately decide on who can access the Prime Minister and when. She ran Ed Miliband's office when he was leader (2010-15) and worked under Gordon Brown and Cherie Blair as a personal assistant.

## Stuart Ingham
### Head of Policy

As Head of the No.10 Policy Unit, Stuart Ingham holds responsibility for delivering the policy commitments made in the Labour Party manifesto.

He will have direct oversight of the Government's five missions and seek to tie party policy to these ambitions. He first started working as the Prime Minister's parliamentary office in 2016 as a Senior Researcher.

## Matthew Doyle
### Director of Communications

Matthew Doyle holds responsibility for planning and overseeing the No.10 communications strategy. He will seek to put a positive spin on policy developments. He will take on the role of spokesperson for the Prime Minister.

Doyle has a strong political background having previously worked as an adviser for both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Doyle will also be able to provide advice based on previous experience in government.

# Political Department.

**No.10's political department will be responsible for implementing the Government's political strategy. Their ultimate aim is to strengthen Labour's political appeal and guarantee future electoral success.**

The team's key responsibilities will include rebuttal, liaison with the Parliamentary Labour Party, analysis of public opinion, and the interests of key voter demographics.

By tasking this department, with the management of key relationships, the Labour Government is demonstrating an attempt to created a more united governing party, an issue which dominated headlines under the last Government.

## Claire Reynolds
**Political Director**

Reynolds will be the link between the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and No.10. She will be in charge of maintaining positive and constructive relations across the PLP to ensure a strong, cohesive and supportive Labour backbench in the House of Commons. Reynolds previously worked in No.10 under Blair and Brown when they were in office.

She has also previously stood as a Labour candidate for election to the European Parliament. Most recently she worked as head of Labour Womens' Network. Given her background, she will have strong relationships with both veteran Labour MPs, elected pre-2010, as well as the new female MPs who will have come into Parliament through the Labour Womens' Network.

## Claire Stewart
**Director of Trade Union Relations**

Claire Stewart will be vital to the functioning of No.10's political department. Given increasing Trade Union activity, her role will be critical to quelling the likelihood of strike action whilst balancing public perception of the party's relationships with union leaders.

Stewart has a background as a union organiser for Unison, one of the UK's largest trade unions.

## Varun Chandra
**Business Adviser**

Chandra will seek to build relationships with UK businesses and grow partnerships. He will help to ensure that the policies coming out from No.10 do not have an adverse impact on how businesses view the Government.

During their last few years in opposition Labour placed a strong focus on building their business relations, with over 400 business leaders attending their Labour Business Conference in February 2024.

Chandra has a background in private equity, coming directly from Managing consultancy Hakluyt which advised 15 of the 20 largest private equity firms.

# Communications Department.

**Headed up by Matthew Doyle, the communications department will hold responsibility for carrying out No.10's communications strategy. Their ultimate aim is to market the Government's policies and put a positive spin on policy developments.**

The team's key responsibilities will include briefing the media on key Government announcements via press huddles. This is where the communications team will brief the media, from Downing Street, on the Government's key messages for that week, allowing them to put a positive spin on messaging and have some control over the narrative.

This department will also be responsible for writing speeches for the Prime Minister. This will be of critical importance as the public's perception of the Prime Minister, and the Government, relies heavily on the keynote speeches given by the Prime Minister and his Ministers as they will be the moments that grab the most media attention.

## Steph Driver
### Deputy Director of Communications

Driver will work closely with Doyle to deliver the No.10 strategy. She will seek to ensure that planned visits and announcements align with the communications strategy and priorities for that week.

She previously worked with the Prime Minister as his Director of Communications during his time as Leader of the Opposition. She started her career as a researcher for the now Speaker of the House.

## James Lyons
### Director of Strategic Communications

Lyons will lead a new strategic communications team inside Downing Street where he will be in charge of "the grid", a strategic planning tool used by the Government to manage and coordinate its communications and announcements.

Lyons previously worked at TikTok and as Director of Communications for the NHS. Prior to this he was Deputy Political Editor at the Daily Mirror and the Sunday Times. Lyons has been described as a "strategic thinker" who is popular with, and respected by, his, former journalist colleagues.

## Tom Lillywhite
### Director of Digital

Lillywhite will be responsible for overseeing social media content, videography, photography, advertising campaigns, and policy graphics.

He will also play a part in shaping the communications strategy, looking at how messages can be amplified across digital channels. His influence may grow as digital content may become crucial to tackling the threat from Reform given their successful TikTok strategy in the General Election.

### This department is also made up of:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Callum Masters** Head of Broadcasting | **Lidia Fanzo** Head of Print | **Alan Lockey** Speechwriter |
| **Caitlin Roper** Head of Digital | **George Mason** Press Officer | **Sophie Nazemi** Press Secretary |

# Policy Unit.

**Headed up by Stuart Ingham, No.10's Policy Unit supports the Prime Minister providing access to policy advice, which is responsive to the urgent and the important issues of the day, as well as politically attuned.**

The role of No.10's policy unit has varied significantly under different Prime Ministers. It's key functions include providing advice on policy papers put to the Prime Minister from departments and reporting on progress of the policy in each department. They are also responsible for fostering and maintaining good relations between departments and No.10 to allow the Government to deliver on its five key missions effectively.

The wider No.10 operation contains a host of former Labour staffers and think tank staff who have previously experience working in these policy areas and are charged with the day-to-day delivery of the Prime Minister's agenda.

Given his influence in the manifesto writing process and the Government's key missions for economic growth underlining all policy decisions, Rav Athwal will play a significant role in the policy unit as Head of Economic Policy.



### Rav Athwal
**Head of Economic Policy**

Athwal is a hugely influential figure, having written the Labour Party's 2024 manifesto. He will be committed to seeing its implementation.

Much of Athwal's job during the manifesto writing process was helping to develop agreements between the party's leadership, shadow cabinet members, and union leaders. This appointment again signals the proactive approach taken by Labour to avoid falling into the pitfalls faced by the previous Conservative Government over internal divides and conflicts.

He previously worked as the Head of Growth Strategy at the Treasury.

**This department is also made up of policy advisers for covering the Government's core agenda.**

**These include:**

**Harvey Redgrave**
Policy Special Adviser (Home Affairs)

**Laura Hickey**
Policy Special Adviser (Foreign Affairs)

**Carys Roberts**
Policy Special Adviser (Energy, Environment and Climate)

**Rachel Statham**
Policy Special Adviser (Education, Early Years and Childcare)

**Nick Williams**
Policy Special Adviser (Infrastructure, Housing and Transport)

**Muneera Lula**
Policy Special Adviser (Culture)

**Isabel Abbs**
Policy Special Adviser (Devolution)

**Tom Webb**
Policy Special Adviser (Health and Public Services)

# Special Advisers are a critical part of the teams that support 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.

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 governing party overlap.

# Cabinet Teams.

**Rachel Reeves**
Chancellor
- Katie Martin
- Benn Nunn
- Matt Pound
- Felicity Slater
- Spencer Thompson
- Neil Amin-Smith
- Anna Valero
- Rhodri Thomas

**Pat McFadden**
Cabinet Office
- John Stevens
- James Kilmartin
- Joe Knight

**David Lammy**
Foreign Secretary
- Will Heilpern
- Tom Raines
- Ben Judah

**Yvette Cooper**
Home Secretary
- Amy Richards
- Natasha Collett
- Damian McBride
- Callum Tipple
- Jess Leigh

**Angela Rayner**
Deputy PM and Housing, Communities and Local Government Secretary
- Nick Parrott
- Alex Jones
- Issy Bull
- Kate Robson

**John Healey**
Defence Secretary
- Tom Hughes
- Daniel Harris
- Grace Wright

**Wes Streeting**
Health Secretary
- Will Prescott
- Kirsty O'Brien
- Matt Goddin
- Sarah Harrison

**Peter Kyle**
Science Innovation and Technology Secretary
- Nicola Bartlett
- Darren Murphy
- Billy French

**Ed Miliband**
Energy Security and Net Zero Secretary
- Jonty Leibowitz
- Tobias Garnett
- Olly Nicholson
- Eleanor Salter

**Jonathan Reynolds**
Business Secretary
- Fionnuala McGoldrick
- Jack Gylnn
- Sophia Kewell

**Steve Reed**
Environment Secretary
- Jamie Williams
- Oliver Longworth
- Eleanor Salter

**Lisa Nandy**
Culture Secretary
- Harjeet Sahota
- Richard Howarth

**Bridget Phillipson**
Education Secretary
- Owain Mumford
- Tim Waters
- Vicky Salt
- Rosy Roche

**Liz Kendall**
Work and Pensions Secretary
- Graeme Cooke
- Alex Zatman
- Bex Bailey

**Louise Haigh**
Transport Secretary
- Stef Lehmann
- Tim Bliss
- Jenny Killin
- Priya Rane

# HM Treasury.

**Working into the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves and her Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's economic policy and ensuring they are on track to achieve Labour's key mission for the Treasury, sustained economic growth.**

The Treasury is the most influential government department. It holds primary responsibility for managing the Government's finances and supporting the stability and health of the economy. Its functions include:

- Economic Policy
- Fiscal Policy
- Monetary Policy
- Public Expenditure
- Public Revenue
- Financial Regulation
- International Finance
- Financial Services Policy

## Katie Martin
### Chief of Staff

Martin is responsible for advising the Chancellor and managing political staff within the Treasury. She will oversee operations and direct Treasury strategy. She will work closely with civil servants, to ensure the Chancellor's plans are implemented. Martin also worked as Rachel Reeves' Chief of Staff for three years in the Shadow Cabinet.

She also worked as the Chief Press Officer to Gordon Brown when he served as Prime Minister. This role was as a civil servant and as such has a strong understanding of the workings of the civil service.

## Ben Nunn
### Director of Communications

Nunn will leads on the Treasury's communications strategy. He will likely sound out journalists with potential stories on to test the water on future tax rises or spending decisions. He will also help to arrange media appearances and ensure messaging within speeches and across digital channels matches the Government's mission for growth.

He started his career in healthcare PR having worked as an adviser to the Prime Minister since 2017, he will help to ensure that relations between No.10 and the Treasury remain smooth.

## Matt Pound
### Political Secretary

Pound is responsible for adding political spin to documents prepared by civil servants and engaging with the Parliamentary Labour Party on behalf of the Treasury. He will be responsible for liaising with the relevant PPS to organise the oral questions grid, providing supportive MPs with pre-written, helpful questions.

Pound first entered the fold as the Deputy Field Director for the Prime Minister's leadership campaign. He later assumed the role of Senior Adviser for Elections, becoming a critical player in the recent General Election.

**Also advising the Treasury is:**

**Neil Amin-Smith**
Special Adviser

**Rhodri Thomas**
Special Adviser

**Anna Valero**
Special Adviser

**Spencer Thompson**
Special Adviser

**Felicity Slater**
Special Adviser

# Cabinet Office.

**The Cabinet Office's main mission is to support the Prime Minister in ensure the effective running of the government. It is informally known as the corporate headquarters for government.**

The Cabinet Office's purpose is to maintain the integrity of the Union, sustain a flourishing democracy, and to ensure the delivery of the public services.

The Cabinet Office is also often a home for teams working on specific time-limited issues that directly reflect the Prime Minister's priorities. For example, the Cabinet Office COP Unit provides financial and technical support to help countries overcome social challenges related to low carbon transition.

## John Stevens
### Special Adviser

Given his background as Political Editor at the Daily Mirror and Daily Mail, Stevens will lead on the Cabinet Office's communications strategy. He will be involved in coordinating press huddles, liaising with the press, and promoting stories. He will also help to arrange media appearances and ensure messaging within speeches and across digital channels matches the Government's mission for growth.

His background at the Daily Mail will mean he is well equipped to provide advice on appealing to the more right-wing voters.

## James Kilmartin
### Special Adviser

Prior to joining the Cabinet Office, Kilmartin worked as Director of Strategy at Labour Together. The think tank has always been closely aligned to Keir Starmer and is regarded as highly influential in group upon the current Labour Party.

Kilmartin has a background in public affairs having spent over 10 years working in the industry. He started his career at the Financial Services Ombudsman before moving to Ofgem and then later as a Director at Flint Global Agency.

## Joe Knight
### Special Adviser

Joe Knight joined the Cabinet Office from Labour HQ, where he worked before the election as a Senior Economics Policy Adviser.

He will bring more of a policy perspective to the department, ensuring that its administrative functions are aligning with the priorities of Starmer's Government and the key missions laid out in Labour's Manifesto.

# Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

**Working into Secretary of State, Steve Reed, and his Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's action on water, nature, and the circular economy.**

### Jamie Williams
**Special Adviser (Media)**

Williams will brief and advise the Secretary of State before media appearances. He will assist with quotes, press releases, and overall communications. He will hold influence over departmental messaging, ensuring the Government's missions are clear. Williams worked as a Political Adviser to the Secretary of State during his time in opposition. He has a background in public affairs having worked for two separate agencies.

### Oliver Longworth
**Special Adviser**

Longworth will be tasked with managing the Secretary of State's political staff and coordinating strategy. He has previously been named in PR Week's 30 under 30 list. He worked in the attack and rebuttal unit at Labour HQ before the election as well as working on Anas Sarwar's Scottish leadership campaign.

### Eleanor Salter
**Special Adviser (joint with DESNZ)**

Salter will work closely on how energy policy affects the environment. She will be close to Defra's regulation of water companies. She previously worked at the Tribune.

# Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

**Working into the Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, and her Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's action on housing and planning.**

### Nick Parrott
**Chief of Staff**

Parrott will be responsible for advising the Deputy Prime Minister and managing political staff within MHCLG. He will oversee operations. He previously worked as national Head of Operations for Unite, the Union, during the 2015 election. Parrott worked as Angela Rayner's Parliamentary Aide since 2016, over this time he will have built up a close relationship with her and will be fairly influential in her decision making.

### Alex Jones
**Special Adviser – Communications**

Jones will provide across the board advice on communications, policy, and political strategy. Jones previously held a communications role at GMB Union. Jones will be involved in arranging media appearances and ensure messaging within speeches and across digital channels matches the Government's mission for growth.

### Isabel (Issy) Bull
**Special Adviser**

Bull will be influential in advising the Deputy Prime Minister on delivering reforms of the NPPF and the mission to build 1.5m new homes. She has worked for Rayner since 2022 and has a background in consultancy.

### Kate Robson
**Special Adviser**

Robson will work to add political spin to documents prepared by civil servants to ensure policy coming out of MHCLG aligns with the Government's core missions. She will also advise the Deputy Prime Minister on maintaining good political relations with the Parliamentary Labour Party, which could prove a particularly challenging role if there is opposition to Green Belt development on a constituency level. She has worked for the Labour Party for over five years and started her career as a Campaign Coordinator in the 2019 General Election.

# Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

**Working into Secretary of State, Ed Miliband, and his Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's action on delivering clean power and transitioning to net zero.**

### Jonty Leibowitz
**Special Adviser**

Leibowitz will advise on policy related to energy, the green transition, and financing net zero. He has worked for the Secretary of State for over four years, over which he will have built up a close, trusted relationship with Miliband.

### Tobias Garnett
**Special Adviser**

Garnett will work to drive forward the Government's mission to deliver clean power by 2030. He formerly coordinated Extinction Rebellion's legal strategy team, and as such there has been media backlash to his appointment.

### Olly Nicholson
**Special Adviser**

Nicholson has worked for the Secretary of State in his Parliamentary Office for over five years. Prior to this he worked as an Intern in the office of a Welsh Labour MS for nearly two years.

### Eleanor Salter
**Special Adviser (joint with DEFRA)**

Salter will seek to integrate nature and the environment into the Government's energy agenda. She will work closely on the regulation of energy companies. She previously worked at the Tribune.

# Department for Business and Trade.

**Working into Secretary of State, Jonathan Reynolds, and his Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's action on business, industry and trade.**

### Fionnuala McGoldrick
**Chief of Staff and Communications Adviser**

McGoldrick will oversee the operations, strategy, and communications coming out of the department. She will liaise with senior civil servants and manage political staff. Prior to this she worked as Head of Stakeholders for Labour and Chair of Labour Students.

### Jack Glynn
**Special Adviser on Trade Policy**

Glynn will advise on policy relating to trade deals and exports, as well as liaising with the Board of Trade, of which Reynolds is the President.

### Sophia Kewell
**Special Adviser on Business Engagement**

Kewell will focus on stakeholder engagement and look to maintain a positive relationship with business leaders. Prior to her appointment she was Director of Public Affairs at UK Finance and Chair of Labour in the City.

# Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

**Working into Secretary of State, Peter Kyle, and his Ministerial team, these are the advisers tasked with delivering and promoting the Government's action on science, research and development, innovation and technology (including AI).**

### Nicola Bartlett
**Special Adviser**

Bartlett previously worked for Angela Rayner and Labour MP Jo Stevens. She also acted as Yvette Cooper's Political Adviser during her time as Shadow Home Secretary. She has a background in journalism, previously holding the role of Political Correspondent at The Mirror.

### Darren Murphy
**Special Adviser**

Murphy will provide broad support to the Secretary of State across policy, communications and politics. He has strong political experience, having previously worked as a Special Adviser to Tony Blair, before going onto work in consultancy.

### Billy French
**Special Adviser**

French worked in Peter Kyle's parliamentary office and acted as a Political Adviser during Labour's time in opposition. He will advise the Secretary on State of key policy developments.

# Department for Transport.

### Stef Lehmann
**Special Adviser**

Lehmann was Director of Transport at Labour Together, helping to develop policy ahead of the General Election. Prior to this, she worked at a public affairs agency leading on their transport offer advising major corporates and investors on the sector.

### Jenny Killin
**Special Adviser**

Killin has previously worked for Unite union, and as an adviser to Labour MP James Murray during his time as London's Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development.

### Tim Bliss
**Special Adviser**

Bliss was formerly Parliamentary Assistant to Kerry McCarthy when she was Shadow Minister for Climate Change. Following this he worked as Louise Haigh's Parliamentary Assistant during her time as Shadow Secretary of State.

He will support Haigh in ensuring the department is on track to meet sustainability goals.

### Priya Rane
**Special Adviser**

Rane previously worked as a Press Officer for the TUC from 2020-2024. In 2020, she worked with the Cabinet Office and various London authorities as part of the COVID-19 Pan-London Gold Comms Group, assisting with media work around the pandemic. She will provide the Secretary of State with media and communications support.

# CAVENDISH