

New Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office and Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service

The Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced the appointment of Alex Chisholm as the new Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office and Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service.

Alex will succeed Sir John Manzoni, whose departure from the Civil Service has been long-planned but who has agreed to stay on to support the Government's response to coronavirus over the next few months.

Alex is currently serving as Permanent Secretary at the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and was previously Chief Executive of the Competition & Markets Authority.

The Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Gove said:

I am delighted Alex has been chosen as the Cabinet Office's new Permanent Secretary, and Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service. He is an outstanding public servant who has also had a successful career in business and regulation. I look forward to working with him.

In the medium term, much of Alex's work will necessarily be coronavirus response related. But Alex will be responsible for supporting ministers to develop and then drive forward a reform programme for the Civil Service, building on the Government's existing efficiency programme. He will also supervise all the Cabinet Office's various work programmes including on preparing for the end of the transition period, strengthening the union, and defending our democracy.

I want to add my thanks to Sir John Manzoni for his service. Over the last few years, the cross-departmental functional governance programme has become embedded as part of Whitehall's machinery, leading to significant savings for the public purse and improved performance. I wish Sir John all the very best for the future.

Welcoming Alex's appointment, the Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, Sir Mark Sedwill, said:

I have asked Alex to lead the ongoing transformation of the Civil Service to further enhance its efficiency, effectiveness and

agility, creating the high-performance, innovative and digitally powered service we need for the times we are in. He will also bring proven leadership skills to help guide and support the 7,000 talented staff who work across the Cabinet Office and its Arm's Length Bodies.

I would also like to place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation for all that my colleague Sir John Manzoni has accomplished over the last five years in the role. This includes his leadership on Civil Service modernisation, in particular embedding our functional approach and improving our digital and commercial capability, which has been a significant contribution to effective government. I wish him well in the next phase of his career.

Commenting on his appointment, Alex Chisholm said:

I am truly thrilled to be asked to lead the Cabinet Office and Civil Service reform at this time. The present emergency is a powerful reminder of how important the work of Government is to the whole country.

I look forward to working with Ministers, colleagues in the Cabinet Office, Permanent Secretaries across government and public service leaders, to deliver for the government and the public together.

Sir John Manzoni, who has been CEO of the Civil Service since 2014, said:

I wish Alex every success in his new roles. He will benefit from the fact – as I have done – that the UK Civil Service is truly world-class, with brilliantly talented people at every level of the organisation.

It has been a privilege to work alongside so many of them in the Cabinet Office and beyond. Civil servants do extraordinary things every day to serve and support their fellow citizens. We are seeing this demonstrated more than ever as we manage the coronavirus pandemic.