

News story: Appointment of new Permanent Secretary at DExEU

The Cabinet Secretary, Sir Mark Sedwill, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, has today announced two senior Whitehall moves.

Philip Rycroft will retire from the Civil Service and his role as Permanent Secretary at the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) at the end of this month. He will be succeeded by Clare Moriarty, currently the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

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

Clare Moriarty is an experienced and highly-effective Permanent Secretary, who has led DEFRA with great distinction. She has a deep understanding of the practical and policy challenges and opportunities of Brexit. I am delighted that Clare will be leading DExEU through the next phase and playing a central role in the entire government effort. I am also pleased that she will continue to lead vital components of the Civil Service's corporate agenda, including as faith & belief champion.

He paid tribute to Philip Rycroft, saying:

Philip has demonstrated exceptional leadership of the department during his time as Permanent Secretary, and I'm grateful to him for the enormous contribution he's made to a number of departments during his years of public service. Particular tribute goes to his time in the Cabinet Office as Head of UK Governance Group and his role as the Director General of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office from 2012 to 2015. Over the years, I have personally benefited from and valued Philip's unparalleled expertise on constitutional matters and I wish him all the very best for the future.

The Secretary of State for the Department for Exiting the European Union, the Rt Hon Stephen Barclay MP, said:

I would like to thank Philip Rycroft for his excellent leadership of the department, initially as Second Permanent Secretary and subsequently as head of the department since October 2017. Under Philip's guidance, the department has been at the heart of the government's preparations for a smooth and orderly exit from the European Union, and to deliver the mandate of the people.

I'm also delighted to welcome Clare Moriarty to the department. She brings with her a wealth of experience and is extremely well qualified to take up the challenges of the next phase of exit preparations.

Clare Moriarty said:

It's an honour to be asked to lead the Department for Exiting the European Union at such an important time for the UK. We have a massive agenda ahead of us and I look forward to working with Stephen Barclay and the excellent team in DExEU to chart the way forward.

It's been my immense privilege to lead DEFRA for the last three and a half years, and my respect and admiration for colleagues across the DEFRA group is profound. We have led the way in preparing for EU exit while also progressing the government's commitment to improve the environment within a generation, and continuing to deliver vital services for our customers. Tamara Finkelstein, as interim Permanent Secretary, and the senior team will provide stability and leadership over the coming months to enable the department to deliver its critical work.

A Civil Service Commission-led competition will be launched in due course to find a permanent successor to Clare Moriarty. Tamara Finkelstein, currently leading on DEFRA's EU Exit preparations, will be acting Permanent Secretary at DEFRA until a successor is appointed.