

Public sector employment

Between the end of 2019 and June 2023 the NHS increased its staff by 230,000 and the civil service by 67,000. It is no wonder there has been such a large increase in public spending. Other public sector administration over the same time period is up 41,000 making a total of 108,000 with the civil service.

It is true Ministers have allowed all of this to happen. Chief Secretaries to the Treasury and Cabinet Office Ministers responsible for personnel should have asked more questions about why such a huge recruitment was underway and why it was so top heavy.

It is, however, also true that Permanent Secretaries for each Department are the Accounting Officers. On their high six figure salaries they are charged with ensuring financial regularity and value for money. Why have they recruited so many to ensure such a collapse of productivity? Why hasn't the Chairman of The Public Accounts Committee, Meg Hillier, called them out or cross examined them about this huge increase in spending with no increase in output?

There have always been large pockets of over employment. Why does the Army have 650 colonels and Brigadiers?

Why does the Cabinet Office have 74 Directors often duplicating functions of departments? How many Chief Executives are there in the NHS with its overlapping CEO s of Health Trusts, national quangos and the rest? Why can they not even tell me how many CEO s they have on the payroll?

Ministers of State in each department could be empowered by Secretaries of State to get to grips with excessive administrative overmanning, under the guidance of the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. They could ask for plans from Permanent Secretaries to get back up to 2019 levels of productivity for starters, as they must remember how they did that.