

NEWS FROM LABOUR: Shadow Cabinet appointments

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

“I’m pleased to announce appointments to Labour’s Shadow Cabinet. We have a wealth of talent in our party and the strength of our shadow team will develop Labour’s alternative plan to rebuild and transform Britain, so that no one and no community is left behind.”

The new appointments are:

Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – Rebecca Long-Bailey

Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Sue Hayman

Shadow Secretary of State for Wales –
Christina Rees

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury – Peter Dowd

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News story: David Mundell in Brussels: Getting the best deal for the whole of the UK

From:

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The Scottish Secretary was in Brussels to discuss how the UK Government is representing Scotland as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell met with Scottish MEPs, EU academics and business representatives in Brussels today [Thursday 9 February], to discuss how the UK Government is representing people and business interests in Scotland.

Mr Mundell also met with other European member states while in Brussels, as part of a two-day programme of European engagement on economic, social and cultural matters. Tomorrow [Friday 10 February] he will travel to Berlin.

Speaking after the meetings, Mr Mundell said:

The UK government has been forming a strong UK-wide evidence base as we prepare for negotiations to forge a new, mutually-beneficial partnership with Europe. Today I set out how the Scottish Government and the UK Government are working together to ensure we get the best deal for Scotland and the whole of the UK.

I also met representatives from a number of EU member states, and I was heartened to find a willingness to work with the UK as we leave the EU – underlining that we are leaving the EU but not leaving Europe.

Today [Thursday 9 February] Mr Mundell met:

- UK MEP Vicky Ford, chair of the European Parliament's single market committee.
- European thinktanks CEPS, Open Europe and Bruegel.
- The Permanent Representatives of several key European partners, including Italy, Greece, Belgium and the Netherlands.
- The CBI's Brussels representative.

Mr Mundell's visit is part of the UK Government's determination to get the best possible deal for Scotland and all parts of the UK as we leave the EU. This direct engagement will ensure that key figures in Brussels understand the UK's ambitions in delivering a deal that works for the UK and all of its nations.

In Berlin Mr Mundell will meet Scottish academic and business interests, and host a reception for the Edinburgh International Film Festival at the British Embassy. This will showcase the Edinburgh festival to the world's cinema industry, who will be in Berlin for the Berlinale.

Cabinet Secretary confirms £18m of funding for Glastir Advanced

Glastir Advanced is the flagship component of Glastir, through which the Welsh Government offers financial support to farmers and land owners to improve the environmental management of their land. Glastir pays for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services aimed at combating climate change, improving water management and maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

Glastir Advanced offers targeted financial interventions, aimed at helping farmers and landowners to achieve value for money environmental improvements for habitats, species, soil and water.

The new round of funding for Glastir Advanced is worth £18.36m and is expected to deliver up to 340 Glastir Advanced contracts in 2018 (estimated at £54k per contract). The Expression of Interest window for Glastir Advanced 2018 will open on 28 February 2017 and will close at midnight on 31 March 2017.

The Cabinet Secretary made the announcement as she officially opened the new Farmers Union of Wales offices in Newtown. She said:

“I am very pleased to announce, here at these impressive new FUW offices in Newtown, the opening of a new round of Glastir Advanced funding worth over £18million.

“Glastir Advanced is very much at the forefront of delivering the Welsh Government’s objectives for the rural environment. I encourage farmers and landowners across Wales to find out more information on whether they are eligible to apply for a Glastir Advanced contract and, if they are, to submit an expression of interest before 31st March.”

More information on [Glastir Advanced](#), including expression of interest guidance will be available shortly.

Glastir is funded by the [Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-20](#), financed by the Welsh Government and the European Union.

Speech: Government at your service: Ben Gummer Op-Ed

To govern is to serve – that principle is in question.

As the Prime Minister has reflected, what occurred last June represented a direct challenge to the way that government operates and interacts with its citizens. Our collective faith in democracy and the relationship between the citizen and the state has faltered.

The referendum vote was a message not only to leave the European Union, but to address that gap that has come to separate those who govern and those whom we seek to serve.

If governing is to serve the people, it is the consistent delivery of effective and efficient public services for the citizen that underpins everything we do as a government. But while the vital work to improve and reform our everyday public services will continue throughout this Parliament – building upon fantastic achievements by my predecessors – there remains the question not simply of how public services work better for the user, but what public service actually means to the individual citizen.

Indeed, this is a question that transcends the professionalism and dedication of the thousands of committed civil servants I have the privilege of working with every day. They go to work wanting to do things for the better and for the public good. Yet that genuine spirit of public service is lost in the opaque interface that currently exists between the citizen and the state.

In too many of their interactions with government, the public is made to feel as though they are the servants of the government, rather than the other way around.

And it is not simply the user who is disadvantaged by this relationship. Public servants are not able to fulfil their vocation. We have asked them to work in poor buildings, to antiquated working patterns, in excessively hierarchical organisation structures, and with sub-optimal technology. By reducing the ability of our public servants to work productively, we are compromising their ability to serve the public.

It is my simple ambition to reverse that relationship. I want to see a revolution in the way we deliver public services – so that people up and down our country feel that government is at their service, at every single stage in the journey and at every single moment of every interaction.

The public has a right to expect the same quality of service from the government as they do from private providers.

Whether it is [filling in a tax return online](#), [paying council tax](#), [claiming Universal Credit](#), applying for a grant of probate, visiting a government building or [applying for a driving licence](#), the citizen's journey must be as

efficient and smooth as possible – all while maximising value for money for the taxpayer and delivering our commitment to be the most transparent government in the world.

That is why I am today announcing four areas in which we will deliver the profound transformational shift that is necessary to restore faith in our democracy.

First, we will drive forward a renewed focus on digital government as the means to deliver services for the taxpayer. Today we are publishing our Government Transformation Strategy, outlining our commitment to utilise the virtues of technology to reshape government by ensuring millions of people are able to access online the services they need, whenever they need.

As well as moving as many services online as possible, we must harness the value of open data as a means to innovate and improve the range of services available to the public and enhance the transparency of government. We will appoint a new Chief Data Officer – alongside the assembly of a Data Advisory Board – in order to best align our efforts to make the best use of data across government and drive our open data and data transformation policies.

Third, we will work to ensure that our Civil Service has an equality of representation around the United Kingdom, so that public servants have a depth of experience of the public they serve. The Cabinet Office is currently reviewing the location of government agencies and arms-length bodies, and will consider relocating them where they could generate local areas of expertise, support private sector growth and enable a fairer distribution of Civil Service expertise, especially at a senior level.

And fourth, we will deliver all of these changes – and more – while maintaining this Government's constant drive to identify and drive efficiencies in government, root out fraud and error wherever possible, and make considerable savings for the hard-working taxpayer.

Every single member of the public deserves a government that is responsive, accountable and effective – twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week.

As I hope I am able to convey to you this morning, we will deliver our commitment to transform the relationship between the citizen and the state so that the latter serves the former – not the other way round. Only by doing so will we deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to build a country that truly works for everyone.

Ministers must do much more to ensure

that every victim of domestic abuse has access to support they need – Champion

Sarah Champion MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, responding to today's statistical release from the ONS on violent crime and sexual offences, said:

"It is unacceptable that hundreds of thousands of women still suffer violence in the home every year. And the official figures significantly underestimate the true extent of the problem.

"But under this Tory Government domestic violence services are in crisis and funding for front-line professionals is being cut.

"Ministers must do much more to ensure that every victim of domestic abuse has access to support they need."

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