

# [Exchange of letters between Sir Mark Sedwill and the Prime Minister](#)

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## [Cabinet Secretary to stand down](#)

Sir Mark Sedwill has today announced that he will stand down from his role as Cabinet Secretary, National Security Adviser and Head of the Civil Service in September, after over 30 years in Government service.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Sir Mark said:

Two years ago, when my predecessor fell ill, your predecessor asked me to step in as Cabinet Secretary, and you asked me to continue to support you through Brexit and the Election period. It was obviously right to stay on for the acute phase of the Covid-19 crisis. As you are setting out this week, the Government's focus is now shifting to domestic and global recovery and renewal.

I am fortunate to have served in some of the most challenging and rewarding jobs in national and international public service under seven prime ministers and in extraordinary times. I am grateful for your confidence and friendship as both Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister. I wish you well and, of course, remain at your disposal in the years ahead. It has been a privilege to serve.

In his response, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Sir Mark's public service:

Over the last few years I have had direct experience of the outstanding service that you have given to the Government and to

the country as a whole.

It has been by any standards a massive contribution – but as PM I have particularly appreciated your calm and shrewd advice.

You have also spoken with a unique authority – unusual in a Cabinet Secretary – on international affairs and national security; and as National Security Adviser you have done much to keep this country safe. It is therefore great news that you have agreed to continue to serve this country on the international stage, beginning with the UK's preparations for the G7 summit next year.

You have done it all in Whitehall: from Afghanistan to the modernisation of the civil service; from immigration policy to Brexit and defeating coronavirus. After serving for decades with great distinction – and unflappable good humour – I believe you have earned the gratitude of the nation.

In recognition of his distinguished service to public life, the Prime Minister, with the approval of HM The Queen, has nominated Sir Mark Sedwill for a life peerage.

The Prime Minister has also asked Sir Mark to lead a new G7 panel on Global Economic Security as the UK assumes the presidency. Its mission will be to ensure that the global free trading system on which our economy is based remains fair, competitive and secure.

The First Civil Service Commissioner, Ian Watmore, will shortly launch a competition to appoint a new Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service. Applications will be invited from existing and former permanent secretaries.

David Frost, currently the Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and the UK's Chief Negotiator, will succeed Sir Mark as the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser.

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## **British Embassy holds virtual healthcare webinar on COVID-19**

The British Embassy in Egypt, through the work of the UK Department for International Trade hosted a virtual meeting for 30 leading British and Egyptian healthcare companies to discuss their ongoing efforts to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The webinar brought together key decision makers from the Egyptian and UK public and private sectors. Four representatives from the Egyptian Ministry

of Health were joined by Healthcare UK, Ain Shams University Hospitals, Cleopatra Hospital, Vodafone, GSK, Integrated Diagnostics Holdings, the Saudi German Hospital, Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, Public Health England, Royal Colleges, and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

The attendees shared their expertise in dealing with some the challenges that the COVID-19 crisis has created across the world. Representatives from Healthcare UK discussed how they had managed the surge in Covid-19 cases in the UK, including through the rapid conversion of buildings into Nightingale Hospitals, which had expanded capacity by 4,000 beds in just 10 days. They also presented their experience in setting up 'Lighthouse screening labs', which were ready in a few weeks and enabled around 200,000 swab samples to be analysed each day. They also shared methods to remotely monitor symptoms and offer treatment to COVID-19 patients.

Representatives from the Ministry of Health briefed on Egypt's own COVID19 response, while Egyptian medical organisations explained how they are supporting the government's efforts. The last three months have seen deepened coordination between the two countries to tackle the challenges of the pandemic. Through June and July, the UK will import medical gowns from Egypt, while British company PrimerDesign Ltd, a subsidiary of Novacyt SA, has just delivered another batch of 100,000 PCR tests to Egypt.

British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, said:

I am delighted that the Egyptian and UK public and private sectors are working hard, on a daily basis, to share their expertise and address the immediate medical needs of both countries. This is a challenging task given the current worldwide pressure on scarce resources, but it is encouraging to see that it is already producing practical results.

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## [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): letter to councils on the re-opening of public toilets and tips](#)

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## [Four new prisons boost rehabilitation and support economy](#)

- Four new jails at heart of Government's commitment to 10,000 additional prison places.
- Two in the north, two in the south – supporting local economies and the construction industry with thousands of jobs.
- Buildings will use new technology and modern methods of construction.

Four new prisons are to be built across England over the next six years – boosting efforts to cut crime and kickstart the economy.

The first new jail will be built next to HMP Full Sutton, in East Yorkshire, and work is underway to identify locations for a further prison in the North-West of England and two in the South-East.

Thousands of jobs will be created overall in the areas surrounding the prisons during construction and once they have opened. This will provide a major spur to local economies and support the construction industry to invest and innovate following the Coronavirus pandemic.

These prisons are another major step in the Government's £2.5 billion programme to create 10,000 additional prison places. This will deliver modern jails that boost rehabilitation and cut reoffending – providing improved security and additional training facilities to help offenders find employment on release.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

These new jails form a major part of our plans to transform the prison estate, and create environments where offenders can be more effectively rehabilitated and turned away from crime for good.

As well as a boost to our justice system, these prisons will create thousands of new jobs and send a clear signal that the Government can and will continue to invest in the vital infrastructure this country needs.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay MP, said:

We are not only delivering on our commitment to provide 10,000 more prison places, but also signalling a shift in how we build public buildings through a major increase in factory built, modern methods of construction.

Building on lessons from recent school construction, this will be part of a much wider change, to be embedded at the next comprehensive spending review, ensuring public buildings benefit from the quicker assembly times, lower energy use, and stronger green footprint offered by new construction technology.

The new jails will be built more quickly, sustainably and cost effectively than ever before. This is thanks to modern construction methods and new technology that have already been incorporated into the new prison being built at Wellingborough. Components, such as concrete walls, and pipework for water and electricity are built by companies around the country using modern, standardised processes and assembled on site. This in turn will ensure the economic benefits of the investment will reach firms across the country.

The new prisons are designed with enhanced security in mind. Bar-less windows will stop waste being thrown out and prevent prisoners accessing drugs and mobile phones flown in by drones. High speed network cabling will also be incorporated to enable modern security measures such as airport-style security scanning, to prevent the smuggling of the illicit items that fuel violence.

While the operators of the prisons will be announced in due course, the Government is committed to using the innovation, knowledge and expertise of the private and public sectors to deliver the best rehabilitation. It is the Government's intention that at least one prison will be operated by the public sector.

In addition to the four new prisons, construction is well underway at Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, and early works have started at Glen Parva, Leicestershire, to create two new 1,680-place category C resettlement prisons.