

Civil Service says farewell to Clare Moriarty

Former Permanent Secretary of the Department for Exiting the European Union Clare Moriarty has today announced that she will leave the Civil Service.

This comes after the department successfully completed its work in delivering on the result of the referendum and securing a successful exit from the EU on 31 January.

Clare has held a number of critical roles in the Civil Service, previously as Permanent Secretary for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from 2015 to 2019. Prior to this she worked in the Department for Transport, latterly as Director General for Rail, and in the Ministry of Justice as Constitution Director.

Clare has long demonstrated commitment to leadership and change which is why she was called upon by Civil Service World to give their inaugural lecture on leadership in 2018. She has consistently promoted diversity and inclusion as the Civil Service Champion for Faith and Belief.

Government leaders have paid tribute to Clare's dedication and 35 years of public service.

Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service Sir Mark Sedwill said:

I'm enormously grateful to Clare for the exceptional leadership she demonstrated as Permanent Secretary of DExEU and previously at DEFRA. She made an immeasurable contribution to both those departments during periods of great challenge, in addition to many years of dedicated public service in a number of other civil service roles.

I want to pay particular tribute to her dedication to the causes of change and diversity. Through her work on leadership and talent, and as faith and belief champion, Clare played a big part in delivering on vital components of the Civil Service's corporate agenda.

I wish her all the very best for the future.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

I have had the great pleasure of working with Clare at two departments and I am deeply personally grateful for her hard work and dedication.

At both DExEU and Defra she led exceptionally broad portfolios of activity and deepened engagement with Parliament, business, industry, and civic society – work which was instrumental in our successful departure from the EU.

I am delighted to pay tribute to her enormous contribution to public service.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury and former Secretary of State for DExEU, Steven Barclay, said:

I was fortunate enough to work with Clare during one of the most challenging and rewarding tenures I've had in Government to date.

Her support was integral in delivering the mammoth task we were set in leaving the EU, and Clare is truly a credit to our Civil Service.

Clare Moriarty said:

I am immeasurably grateful to my colleagues in both Defra and DExEU for the commitment they showed in supporting negotiations and preparing for our future outside the EU. With DExEU's role now complete and the department wound up, it feels the right time to move on myself.

It has been a privilege to be a civil servant for nearly 35 years across seven departments. I'm proud to have played a part in helping the Civil Service to become more digital, more delivery-focused, more representative of the country we serve, and more inclusive. I will always be a huge supporter of the Civil Service.

[Final decision published in radio merger inquiry](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has investigated Bauer Media's completed purchase of certain radio businesses of Celador Entertainment Limited, Lincs FM Group Limited and Wireless Group Limited, along with the entire business of UKRD Group Limited. These purchases included 50% of First Radio Sales Limited (FRS), a firm that currently provides more than 100 independent local radio stations with access to national advertisers. Income from those advertisers is an important source of revenue for most independent

local radio stations.

As part of an in-depth Phase 2 investigation of these transactions led by an independent group of panel members, the CMA has found competition concerns in relation to the future viability of FRS, which is now jointly owned by Bauer. Bauer's purchase of the 4 radio businesses will take away over half of FRS' business, leaving it unviable.

If FRS were to shut down, independent local radio stations would have only 2 options for sales representation: Bauer or Global (the largest commercial radio group in the UK). This would leave stations with insufficient choice when trying to sell national radio advertising airtime and potentially lead to them paying higher commission rates.

The CMA was also previously concerned that Bauer's purchase of Wireless's Signal 107 station would reduce competition for local advertisers wishing to promote their products in the Wolverhampton area. Following further investigation, the CMA does not have concerns about this.

Due to the very unusual circumstances of this case, the CMA is not requiring Bauer to sell off the radio stations it has bought. In order to maintain FRS' customer base, Bauer would have to sell all the acquired radio stations, and the CMA was concerned that another buyer would not have sufficient incentive to maintain FRS as an active competitor to represent independent stations.

Instead, Bauer will be required to provide advertising representation to independent radio stations on the same terms the stations were receiving from FRS, for 10 years.

Stuart McIntosh, CMA Panel Chair said, "It's really important that independent radio stations have good access to representation for national radio ad sales as it is an important source of income for those stations. Without the CMA's remedy, it's likely that these stations would have to pay over the odds for national advertising representation."

For more information visit the [Bauer Media Group merger inquiry](#) page.

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

UN Human Rights Council 43: Universal Periodic Review Adoption of Iran

Madam President,

The United Kingdom welcomes Iran's engagement with the UPR. However, we are

deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Iran and Iran's continued refusal to allow the Special Rapporteur access to the country. In November last year, we saw the most deadly crackdown against its citizens for decades, while persecution and discrimination towards religious minorities continues unabated.

We welcome the temporary release of several thousand detainees following the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, and together with France and Germany, we have pledged support to UN agencies to assist Iran in combating the outbreak. However, we share the Special Rapporteur's concern about detainees, especially dual nationals – we urge Iran to release them on humanitarian grounds and ensure they are afforded suitable healthcare.

The UK encourages Iran to engage fully with the UN and the international community on their accepted recommendations, and implement them fully.

We regret Iran did not support any of the UK's three recommendations, which were to: demonstrate detainees are not tortured or subject to cruel or inhumane treatment or punishment; allow an impartial trial process, so defendants and lawyers have access to charges and evidence; and investigate sexual exploitation of children and develop a protection plan.

Nevertheless, we remain open to discussing these recommendations with Iran.

Thank you.

[UK aid to tackle global spread of coronavirus 'fake news'](#)

Dangerous myths about coronavirus which are hampering the global fight against the disease will be challenged thanks to a new initiative backed by UK aid.

The support from the Department for International Development will challenge misinformation in South East Asia and Africa, which is then spreading worldwide, and direct people to the right advice to help stop the spread of the virus.

False claims and conspiracy theories have spread rapidly on social media, touting 'cures' like drinking bleach or rubbing mustard and garlic into your skin. These pose a serious risk to health and can speed up the spread of the virus, by stopping people taking simple practical, preventative steps like washing their hands.

DFID's £500,000 support will go to the Humanitarian-to-Humanitarian (H2H) Network, which has extensive experience addressing the spread of

misinformation during epidemics, for example following the 2015 Ebola outbreak.

The work of the H2H Network will complement UK initiatives by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the NHS to tackle misinformation online.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

“Misinformation harms us all. By tackling it at source we will help stop the spread of fake news – and coronavirus – worldwide, including within the UK.”

H2H will work with partners BBC Media Action and Internews to create verified information in various languages to tackle specific mistruths spreading in South East Asia and Africa. Their work will also support journalists in these regions to write more accurately about the virus using information from the World Health Organization.

Support will also go to Translators without Borders, which monitors false information in various languages and translates validated content from WHO and other health agencies, and Evidence Aid which updates a database of research on diseases each day.

The initiative will analyse social media and online content to identify where the misinformation is coming from and how it is spreading – so victims of fake news can be sent the correct information and directed to official health advice.

H2H will also work with social media influencers – vloggers and bloggers – to help spread accurate health information and reach younger online audiences that are more susceptible to fake news.

Some of the social media influencers being engaged include:

- Bianca Gonzalez, a health expert and YouTube vlogger from the Philippines with over 7 million followers on Twitter @iamsuperbianca
- Dr Jahangir Kabir, a Bangladeshi health expert and popular TV presenter with over 1 million Facebook followers @DrJahangirkabircmc
- @KlikDokter – An Indonesian health blog with over 4 million Facebook followers

Some of the more damaging mistruths being targeted include:

- ‘Miracle cures’ for the virus, such as drinking chlorine dioxide, an industrial bleach, or urine, eating garlic, gargling saltwater or spreading cow dung and mustard paste. In Myanmar, news websites have reported false claims supposedly from health officials, advising people

to sleep next to chopped onions claiming this will “absorb the virus” or to drink ginger juice. It is also falsely claimed you cannot catch coronavirus if you have a mosquito bite. Scammers pretending to be health officials in Myanmar have been selling black pepper seeds as a cure.

- Undermining health officials: In Tanzania, people have received a WhatsApp message claiming to be from the health ministry and telling them drinking warm water every few minutes will prevent infection. The exact same message has also appeared in French throughout West Africa, claiming to be from the Canadian Health Ministry. Messages like this are undermining the efforts of real health officials to contain the virus, damaging trust in official advice and confusing people.
- Promoting violence: Rumours that the virus was created or spread deliberately have already led to reported attacks on Chinese nationals across South East Asia as well as in the UK. A video claiming to show Chinese officials shooting coronavirus victims and alleging tens of thousands were executed went viral on social media sites worldwide, after the celebrity sister of a prominent Bollywood actor in India shared them. The video was in fact edited from four completely unrelated clips, including one of Chinese police shooting a rabid dog.

Public Health England is regularly updating its advice on coronavirus, including how people can help stop the spread of infection. Individuals are also being advised to call NHS 111 or contact the NHS dedicated 111 online coronavirus service if they are concerned about any symptoms or any contact they may have had with someone who might be infected.

- The H2H Network consists of approximately 50 organisations, which provide specialist services to the humanitarian aid sector, including tackling fake news in the wake of disasters and epidemics. The H2H Network is supported by UK aid and hosted by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). This support is a new allocation of UK aid support from the UK’s aid commitment.
- The World Health Organization warned in February about an ‘infodemic’ of false information which risked worsening the spread of the virus
- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport earlier this week announced the creation of a new cross-Government counter disinformation unit bringing together expert teams to help provide a comprehensive picture on the potential extent, scope and impact of disinformation on coronavirus in the UK.
- The DCMS-led unit will have regular and robust engagement with social

media companies to monitor interference and limit the spread of disinformation.

- NHS England has also partnered with social media sites and search engines to ensure that official health advice is shown in online searches about the virus, as well as to verify or remove accounts claiming to be from local health authorities
- The new UK aid-backed initiative announced today will complement these efforts, by challenging misinformation beyond the UK, targeting the source of fake news spreading in and from Africa and South East Asia

[Budget brings £640 million boost for Scottish Government](#)

11th March 2020

Delivering his first Budget the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, outlined the additional funding for the Scottish Government, allowing it to deliver on the priorities of the Scottish people.

The Chancellor also announced a package of measures to tackle the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the UK economy, with the Scottish Government to receive additional funding support public services, vulnerable people and reduce the costs for businesses.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Our central mission is to level up and unite people in our shared aims of a more prosperous country, in which opportunity is spread fairly across Scotland and the breadth of our United Kingdom.

This is a Budget that will deliver for the Scottish people, with £640 million in extra funding for the Scottish Government, a significant boost to broadband infrastructure and a package of support for the Scotch whisky industry, among other economic measures.

Our United Kingdom is the most successful political and economic union in history, and through this Budget we will further strengthen the ties that bind us and kickstart a decade of investment in all our communities.

Today's announcements for Scotland also include:

- £640 million in additional funding for the Scottish Government
- A significant package of support for the Scotch whisky industry. Alongside this, a £1 million GREAT campaign to promote the Scottish food and drink sector, including Scotch
- Plans to rollout gigabit capable broadband to the hardest to reach areas of Scotland and increasing 4G coverage in Scotland from 42% to 74%
- Tay Cities has also successfully bid for £6.7 million to fund full fibre broadband
- £10 million over 3 years for research and development to decarbonise UK distilleries, which includes Scotch whisky
- £5 million for trials of 5G in Scotland

With Scotch whisky one of the UK's key exports and an industry that employs more than 10,000 people in Scotland alone, the UK Government is supporting this vital sector with a package of measures including a freeze on spirits duty, and £10 million research and development funding to decarbonise the distilling process. Alongside this a £1 million marketing campaign to promote exports of Scottish food and drink, including Scotch.

The Budget also confirmed £25 million for an Argyll & Bute Growth Deal.

This year's Budget delivers on the promises made to the British people and lays the foundations for a decade of growth by giving everyone the same opportunity to thrive wherever they live.

With commitments to increase the National Living Wage, National Insurance thresholds and the Employment Allowances across the UK, today's Budget means someone working full time on the minimum wage in Scotland will be over £5,200 better off compared to ten years ago.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

This is a great budget for Scotland. Decisions taken by the UK Government over the last year will deliver an almost £2 billion funding boost for the Scottish Government.

People and businesses right across Scotland will see the benefits – more than £5 billion for broadband and 4G connectivity, an increase in the national living wage, £22 billion for research and development across the UK, and a freeze in fuel duty. The Scotch whisky industry gets a welcome boost, with a freeze on spirits and a review of alcohol duty, and £10 million help to develop green technology. We will also invest £1 million in promoting Scottish produce to overseas markets.

We will continue our extensive investment in growth deals across Scotland, now at almost £1.5 billion, with confirmation of £25 million UK Government funding for Argyll and Bute. Every part of Scotland will be covered by growth deals, with investment to be announced soon for Falkirk and the Scottish islands.

Following decisions taken at this Budget, notably on funding for health business rates relief and roads, the Scottish Government's resource and capital budgets in 2020-2021 will increase by over £220m and £410m respectively with a total increase of more than £640m.

The additional funding, when combined with the £1.3bn funding in 2020-21 provided at the Spending Round 2019, results in the largest year-on-year real-terms funding increase for the Scottish Government in a decade.