



**Margaret Greenwood MP**  
Member of Parliament for Wirral West



**Sent by email**

**The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP**  
**Prime Minister**

30 June 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you about your plans to drastically reduce the size of the Civil Service by cutting 91,000 jobs within three years.

I understand that all government departments have been asked to put together plans that will model headcount reductions of 20%, 30% and 40% and that final decisions will be made in the autumn.

As a North West MP, I am very concerned about what this might mean for my constituents in Wirral West, many of whom work in the Civil Service for government departments and non-departmental public bodies, and what it might mean for the local economy.

In 2021, aside from London, the North West of England was the region of the UK with the largest number of civil servants, with 59,340.

Of those, 19,480 were employed in Merseyside and 2,150 of these were employed in Wirral.

According to government statistics, in 2021 the overall Civil Service headcount was 484,880 staff. If there were 91,000 job cuts, this would see the Civil Service reduced by almost one fifth.

In the North West, this could mean the loss of more than 11,000 jobs. On Merseyside, it could mean the loss of more than 3,500 jobs. In Wirral, it could mean the loss of more than 400 jobs.

The impact that such job losses would have on local people and the local economy should not be underestimated, particularly at a time when people and businesses are struggling with the cost of living crisis. I am concerned too about what cuts to the Civil Service would mean for the standard of service that the public would receive.

The Minister for Government Efficiency Jacob Rees-Mogg has said that the government has "taken on quite a number of additional staff – indeed 91,000 – to deal with Covid and some of the consequences of Brexit." He went on to say: "Those two issues are now fading, therefore we can get back to the numbers (of Civil Service staff) we previously had."

However, this is not a view I share, and neither do people who work in the Civil Service. You will be aware that Covid rates are increasing; you will also be aware that people are experiencing long delays when dealing with a number of government departments.

The FDA union, which works with members across more than 200 government departments, agencies and arm's-length bodies, has said that "The arguments put forward by the Minister for Government Efficiency that Civil Service numbers need to fall because the requirements of Brexit and the pandemic are 'now receding' is nonsensical. The UK Civil Service now has significant additional responsibilities because of Brexit and that there are still huge pressures and backlogs as a result of the pandemic that still need to be tackled... To govern is to choose and ultimately this government can decide to cut the Civil Service back to 2016 levels, but it will also then have to choose what the reduced Civil Service will no longer have the capacity to do. Will they affect passports, borders or health?"

Similarly, the PCS union has said that "The Civil Service needs more staff, not less" and that "Making cuts will only make things worse, make waiting lists longer for those seeking passports and driving licences, make telephone queues longer for those with tax enquiries."

These warnings from unions, which represent civil servants across the UK, about the implications of proposed job cuts on the delivery of services are stark.

The government claims to have a levelling up agenda, yet it is contemplating cutting thousands of jobs in the North West.

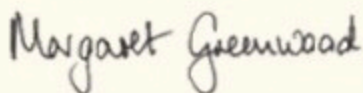
We know that it is the government's ambition to reduce the size of the state. Steve Barclay, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, has said that it is a priority for this government to restore a smaller state. Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has also spoken publicly about how he believes in a small state.

The government's plans for a small state will have adverse consequences for those hardworking civil servants who devote their lives to public service. They will also lead to poorer levels of provision for the public who rely on them. To give one example, my office has received a lot of correspondence from people frustrated that they have not received their renewed passports on time. Cuts to the number of passport office staff would only make matters worse.

A government that runs down the Civil Service runs down the country.

I urge you to think again about your proposed cuts to Civil Service jobs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Greenwood". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Margaret Greenwood MP