



Sir Keir Starmer KC MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

By email only

17 March 2025

Dear Keir

### **Reforming the Civil Service to deliver on government missions**

I am writing on behalf of the Prospect trade union regarding the government's plans to reform the civil service. Prospect represents tens of thousands of specialists, scientific, and technical civil servants. These members will be critical in delivering the kind of civil service needed to achieve your government's missions.

In your speech on 13 March, you said that the civil service is full of talented people who want to serve their country, and that reform is needed to make the best use of their skills. We agree. Prospect members are ready for this debate and eager to work with the government to deliver on this agenda.

An essential part of these reforms must be reviewing the pay frameworks that currently inhibit recruiting those with the digital, technical, and scientific skills the government needs to meet its challenges. *The State of Digital Government Review* and Matt Clifford's *AI Opportunities Action Plan* have made a good start in identifying part of this problem, but we must move much more quickly to address it, if reforms in this area are to have a significant impact in this parliament.

The government must also be wary of falling into the trap of its predecessors and politicians across the Atlantic, who view all regulation as a barrier to growth. In many areas, the regulators Prospect represents members in, such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Intellectual Property Office, and the Office for Nuclear Regulation, are vital in giving industry the assurance it needs to invest in the UK economy. The goal must be to regulate better, not to pursue a blunt approach to removing so-called "red tape."

We also share your belief that it is important to distinguish between blaming broken systems and blaming individuals and organisations. We have been concerned by some of the comments in the public sphere characterising our members as blockers of the government agenda. This is not the case, and we believe that no civil servant should be blamed for doing their job and enforcing existing laws and regulations. We welcome the

Prospect  
100 Rochester Row  
London  
SW1P 1JP

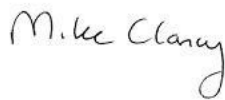
0300 600 1878  
gsoffice@prospect.org.uk  
  
prospect.org.uk

constructive tone take by yourself and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in recent speeches. However, some of the language used in media briefings has been divisive and is not conducive to a respectful conversation about necessary reforms.

Reform will only be effectively delivered alongside the public sector workforce. Trade unions like ours are experts at working with organisations to manage change, particularly in the private sector. We hope you will instruct your ministers and officials to work in much closer partnership with trade unions like Prospect, including us at the earliest possible stage in conversations about change. This 'no surprises' approach works well in private sector collective bargaining, something the government could learn from.

Given the direct interest that Prospect members in the civil service have in this agenda we will be publishing this letter to share it with them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Clancy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Mike Clancy  
General Secretary