

Allocation of officers within the Ministerial Office following election of the new Council of Ministers, Ministers and Assistant Ministers

Introduction

Following the 2022 general election, new Ministers will be elected, and ministerial portfolios could change (including possibly more or fewer Ministers). There may also be a greater expectation of support for Assistant Chief Ministers and Assistant Ministers (which may raise resource and capacity issues).

The Assistant Private Secretary and Private Secretary Job Descriptions are generic ones, and not specific to any individual Minister or Ministry.

To provide direction and assurance in advance of the elections, while accepting that the situation is inevitably fluid, this document sets out some principles to allocate Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries to incoming Ministers.

The broad aim following the election is to deliver stability and Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries who can hit the ground running with their new Minister, while also giving opportunities for change and development.

Approach to allocations

The election does not automatically change the current allocations, and as a starting position, individual Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries remain attached to the same Ministry following the election of a new Minister.

At the same time:

- a. Ministers who continue to be Ministers after the election may ask that their Private Secretaries or Assistant Private Secretary move with them to their new portfolio, to ensure continuity of arrangements. Requests will generally be treated favourably, but this relies on adequate arrangements being put in place for the Assistant Private Secretary or Private Secretary who already supports the Ministry.
- b. Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries may also ask for a transfer to a specific new portfolio to support their development, with a reason as to why this is beneficial, and wherever possible this will be accommodated, but again, this relies on adequate arrangements being put in place for the Private Secretaries or Assistant Private Secretary who already supports the Ministry.
- c. Director Generals may also have opportunity to be consulted on proposed allocations, and they may ask for views of their senior management team, and this will also be weighed in any decisions.
- d. It can be beneficial for Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries to change portfolios from time to time, to provide new challenges and greater breadth of knowledge around the workings of different Departments – at the same time, this guidance is not aimed at encouraging rapid changes in portfolio – generally, a post holder remaining with a Minister for a full term of office is beneficial, with a change after a full term an option for consideration. It is also acknowledged that a new Minister to a department will likely benefit from the experience and in-depth knowledge of a Private

Secretary or Assistant Private Secretary who have already completed some years working for that Ministry.

- e. Noting all the above, notably giving emphasis wherever possible to the wishes of the Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries, the allocation decision is nevertheless not one for either the Minister, or the Private Secretary or Assistant Private Secretary, or the Director General, and will be decided through the appropriate line management structures of the Ministerial Office.
- f. In addition to expressed preferences, factors such as any experience in an area, and whether a change would have wider benefits in terms of concluding on the overall allocation of Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries, will also be considered.
- g. The above will be managed in consultation with each Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretary, and wherever possible with their consent, but it is accepted that in all cases this may not be possible. Ultimately, the role is a generic one and the right allocate a Private Secretaries or Assistant Private Secretary to a Ministry is reserved, as feels best in all the circumstances and applying reasonable process.
- h. Where the number of Ministries reduce, the intention would be to reallocate any Private Secretary or Assistant Private Secretary whose Ministry no longer exists to another role within the Ministerial Office, to a position comparable to their current position, noting learning during the 2018 – 2022 term of office which highlighted that additional support for Assistant Ministers, and the Deputy Chief Minister, is an area where improvement can be delivered. The budget for 2022 is set in the Government Plan, and there is no expectation that changes in ministerial portfolios will reduce overall staffing within the Ministerial Office.
- i. Where the number of Ministries increase, that is also a development opportunity for the Research and Administration Officers to request an act up secondment (which will be supported by way of coaching and ongoing development advice from more experienced staff members). If more than one person requests such an opportunity, a process will take place within the Ministerial Office; and in any event, within 12 months, a full open recruitment will take place (subject to budgetary considerations).
- j. If Private Secretaries or Assistant Private Secretaries have a view on their preference, it would be welcome if they confidentially expressed that in advance of the elections to support planning.
- k. Research and Administration Officers are generally more flexible in who they support, usually supporting more than one Minister. An allocation process will also take place for the incoming government, adopting similar principles, e.g., officers remain with their existing Ministry, unless a change is deemed appropriate in discussion with the relevant Research and Administration Officers.
- l. In the event of a dispute or disagreement, the Grievance Policy would apply.
- m. The above guidance will be subject to informal consultation within the Ministerial Office and will be provided to the States Employment Board for any comment.

- n. The period in which the above decisions will need to be taken is very narrow, with allocation decisions aiming to be substantially taken between the election of the Chief Minister and the election of Ministers, so that in so far as possible allocations are ready for new Ministers. This being the case, support will need to be provided during this period, and the narrow time frame may also limit the overall number of changes that are possible to avoid unmanageable disruption.
- o. Having outlined the above, it is worth repeating that the default position is that Private Secretaries and Assistant Private Secretaries remain with their current Ministry, accepting that some changes are likely given the election of a new government and the expectation that some requests for a transfer will take place.
- p. To note, all changes will be considered in the best interest of the effective and efficient running of the Ministerial Office.

ENDS