

It's time to shake up the management at HMRC

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:25 am

I have [argued for some time](#) that the management of HMRC needs to be radically reformed. My focus has been on the non-executives, whose collective backgrounds suggest the organisation has been captured by the Big 4 accountants and big business, but the Public Accounts Committee has today turned on the executive. [The Guardian has reported:](#)

The chief executive of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs is battling to keep her job after a group of MPs said they had little confidence in her abilities following a "catastrophic leadership failure" in her former role in charge of Britain's immigration system.

The Commons home affairs select committee said Lin Homer repeatedly misled them for years when she was chief executive of the UK Border Agency over the size of the backlogs in asylum and immigration, which now top more than 310,000 cases. Describing the system as "chaotic", the MPs said the backlog would take 24 years to clear at the current rate of progress.

In one of the most severe attacks by a Commons committee on a named Whitehall senior civil servant, the MPs said they were "astounded" when they learned that Homer had been promoted to become the £180,000-a-year chief executive and permanent secretary at [HMRC](#).

I agree. And [said so at the time of the appointment](#).

It's not as if there wasn't warning: Homer's reign in Birmingham also ended with what the Guardian calls "sharp criticism" over a vote rigging scandal. And, as ever under Margaret Hodge the PAC hits its target:

A report by the committee published on Monday demands that parliament should in future be given a veto over leading [civil service](#) appointments to ensure there is no repeat of the Homer case.

"The status quo, in which catastrophic leadership failure is no obstacle to promotion, is

totally unacceptable," the MPs say. "We recommend that in future any failures of this nature should have serious consequences for the individual's career."

That seems fair to me.