

## Even the civil service are pushing back against Starmer

Published: February 13, 2026, 7:24 am

---

Prime Ministers can usually expect a high level of support from their civil servants. Until they alienate them, that is. And it looks as if that is what Starmer has succeeded in doing. I [share this Tweet](#) from Steven Swinford of The Times as evidence of that.

I post it in full, because it summarises the latest farcical mess that Starmer has created for himself, wholly unnecessarily and over a remarkably short period of time, rather well:

 Steven Swinford   
@Steven\_Swinford

Exclusive from [@oliver\\_wright](#)

Government officials refused to sign off on Sir Keir Starmer's decision to sack Britain's most senior civil servant because it would cost the taxpayer a quarter of a million pounds that could not be justified

In an unprecedented move, senior civil servants told Starmer that ministers would have to issue a formal "direction" to officials to make the redundancy payment to the Sir Chris Wormald, the cabinet secretary, because there were no clear and compelling reasons why he should be sacked

Starmer overrode their concerns and agreed to the payout, having concluded that he could no longer work with the man he appointed just over a year ago

The prime minister is planning to install Britain's first female cabinet secretary by replacing Wormald with Dame Antonia Romeo, the current permanent secretary at the Home Office, despite claims made by her former boss at the Foreign Office, Lord McDonald of Salford, that there was evidence she bullied staff when she served as consul-general in New York

[thetimes.com/article/e01c00...](http://thetimes.com/article/e01c00...)

10:21 PM · Feb 12, 2026 · 74.6K Views

What else is there to say? Only that Laurel and Hardy could not have created as many fine messes as Starmer has. That is how absurd this is, and the cost will be high.