

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
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2 November 2018

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to ask you for more details on your plans, announced at Policy Exchange on 31 October, for the future of the FCO.

### **FCO expansion**

1. A number of announcements were made under your predecessor regarding FCO expansion. Of the new overseas FCO posts, positions in London and positions in the overseas network that you announced on 31 October, how many are additional to those that have already been announced?]
2. What criteria and priorities were used in deciding where to open new posts and create new positions?

### **External appointments**

3. Will there be formal criteria set for the skills, including diplomatic skills, that external candidates for ambassadorial positions are expected to hold?
4. Will external appointees be formally required to divest themselves of financial interests which could pose a conflict of interest in their ambassadorial role?
5. Will you commit to external appointees receiving proper scrutiny by way of pre-appointment hearings before the Foreign Affairs Committee?
6. What assessment has been made of the likely effects on recruitment and retention of career FCO diplomats of the proposals for external appointments?

### **Languages**

7. What additional budgetary and other resources have been or will be committed to deliver your plans for expanding the FCO's language skills?
8. How will additional speaker slots in the network be allocated? For example, will this be done in proportion to the size of each overseas mission, or will Priority 1 languages be expanded more than others?
9. Will the increase in the number of language speakers be achieved by adding positions to the overseas network, or will it be done by re-designating existing positions as speaker slots?

10. Will the FCO be maintaining its commitment to reaching 80% target-level attainment in speaker slots by 2020?
11. How will proficiency targets for languages be set under this new system?  
Specifically:
  - a. Will there be changes to the target proficiency (e.g. C1, C2) for existing speaker slots?
  - b. How will target proficiency be set for new speaker slots? Will the overall proportion of C1 and C2 speakers in the network remain the same as it is now?
  - c. Will the process, including exams, required to certify a language speaker's proficiency be different than it is now?

I would be grateful for an answer to this letter by 12 November, to allow us to put any further questions to the Permanent Under-Secretary at his appearance before the Committee the following day. I would expect to publish your response as part of our inquiry.

**Tom Tugendhat MP**  
**Chair**