

The Magic Money Tree branches out to Spinners and Advisors

Jon Trickett, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, has written to the First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Damien Green, asking why the Government has allowed a third of Special Advisers to be paid more than the Prime Minister's SpAd pay cap of £72,000, while limiting other public sector workers to 1 per cent.

It comes as No10 is set to appoint a new Director of Communications, a role which previously attracted a salary in excess of £100,000.

Jon Trickett said:

"This Government is happier spending money on spin doctors than real doctors. It's the same for nurses, firefighters and police who are trying to make ends meet.

"Theresa May had some nerve telling an underpaid nurse who'd seen a 14% real term cut in pay there was no "Magic Money Tree", only to find an extra billion pounds down the back of the settee for a grubby deal with the DUP to cling to power.

"It's a disgrace that a third of the Tories' spinners and advisers are being paid more than Theresa May's declared pay cap of £72,000 whilst hardworking public sector workers are limited to a miserly 1% pay increase. Even the Prime Minister's own joint Chiefs of Staff were paid £140,000 – almost double her declared cap. And now she's looking for a new Director of Communications, a role previously paid £125,000.

"The Prime Minister has ignored calls to lift the public sector pay cap. But it seems that like with David Cameron, some people can access the Magic Money Tree in the Downing Street garden as long as they have the right pass to get to it.

"The Government has forced pay restraint on public sector workers; but there is no such restraint inside Theresa May's Number 10."

Full text of letter to Damian Green:

*Dear
Damian Green,*

*Today
in Cabinet Office Oral Questions I asked you about Special
Advisers' pay and
the public sector pay cap. You failed to answer my question.*

To

recap, following the Government's refusal to lift the pay cap for thousands of nurses, police and firefighters, among many other public servants, I am writing to enquire about the pay for Special Advisers to Secretaries of State.

When

Theresa May became Prime Minister she promised the pay of Special Advisers would be capped at £72,000, unless authorised by her personally. However, the Government's own figures from December 2016 showed that of the 83 Special Advisers, 27 breached this limit. In fact, former advisers to the Prime Minister, her two Joint Chiefs of Staff, were both paid £140,000 a piece, 95% more than the cap she promised.

With

much public interest in the issue, how much has the total expenditure of Special Advisers increased since May 2015?

There

has also been significant attention paid to the value of severance payments awarded to Special Advisers when they leave. What is the total number of severance payments Government has paid out for advisers who have left Downing Street since June 2015?

Would

you let us know, as First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Special Advisers you now employ and if they breach the £72,000 pay cap set by the Prime Minister.

Finally,

I now understand that No10 will soon appoint a new Director of Communications. The previous appointment was paid £125,000. Can you provide any assurance that salary will not rise any further?

Yours

sincerely,

John

Trickett.

Shadow

*Minister for the Cabinet Office and Shadow Lord President of the
Council*