Public Services Level 3 – The role of Government Departments in creating policy

1 of 10 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on the role of government departments in creating policy.

By the end of this session you will be able to:

* Identify the difference between the Prime Minister, Ministers and Government departments
* Explain the role of a variety of different government departments

2 of 10 – Who is who in Government?

Read the information below about the key roles within Government.

**Prime Minister**

The Prime Minister is the head of the UK Government and is responsible for the formation of all Government policy, and the decisions that are made in the relation to Government policy.

**Cabinet Ministers**

Cabinet Ministers are the senior members for the Government. It is their role to discuss the most important issues for the Government. They do this every week in Parliament. There are 22 Cabinet Ministers at the time of writing, although this number can fluctuate between 21 and 23.

**Ministers**

The Ministers are chosen by the Prime Minister from the members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They are responsible for the actions of their department. This means they are responsible not only for the successes in their department, but also the failures. There are 97 other Ministers.

There are 120 Ministers in total.

3 of 10 – Departments and agencies

That quick calculation shows how many people are debating issues in Government and are involved in creating policy.

However, it is not just the Ministers. There are also a wide variety of different departments and agencies who are responsible for putting Government policy into practice. The departments and agencies are responsible for putting the Government policy, for their particular area, into practice.

Download the accompanying **Departments and Agencies Interactive PDF**. Use this to make notes from the information in the following sections.

4 of 10 – Government departments

Read the information below to find out a little more about the different government departments. Visit the associated links for further research.

**Defra** – Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. Defra is responsible for issues related to the environment, food and rural affairs and covers a wide variety of different areas. For example, dairy and milk production, food labelling, infectious diseases and environmental planning. Visit the Defra website below:

[Defra website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs)

**HM Treasury** – The Treasury is the government’s economic and finance ministry. It maintains control over public spending, setting the direction of the UK’s economic policy, and working to achieve strong and sustainable economic growth. Visit the HM Treasury website below:

[About Us – HM Treasury](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-treasury/about)

**Ministry of Justice** – Their main role is to protect the public and reduce reoffending, and to provide an effective criminal justice system for victims and the public. They are responsible for courts, prisons, probation services and attendance centres. They are also responsible for making new laws and safeguarding human rights. Visit the Ministry of Justice website below:

[About Us – Ministry of Justice](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about)

**Department of Health & Social Care** – They fund health and care in England, making sure people have the support, care, and treatment they need. Visit the Department of Health website below:

[About Us – Department of Health and Social Care](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care/about)

**Home Office** – The Home Office is the lead government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counterterrorism and police. Visit the Home Office website below:

[About Us – Home Office](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about)

5 of 10 – Non-ministerial departments

Read the information below to learn about some non-ministerial departments. There are 18 ministerial departments in total.

**Forestry Commission** – They are the government department responsible for protecting, expanding, and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands, and increasing their value to society and the environment. They do this by promoting England’s woods and forests, encouraging people to volunteer and help to maintain them, and getting involved in policy that affects England’s woods and forests. Visit their website below:

[Forestry Commission](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission)

**CPS** – The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principal prosecuting authority for England and Wales, acting independently in criminal cases investigated by the police and other agencies. The CPS decides which cases should be prosecuted, determines the charges in more serious and complex cases, prepares cases and presents them at court and provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses. Visit the CPS website below:

[CPS website](https://www.cps.gov.uk/)

**HM Revenue & Customs** –They are the UK’s tax, payments, and customs authority. They collect the money that pays for the UK’s public services and help families and individuals with targeted financial support. Visit their website below:

[About Us – HM Revenue and Customs](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/about)

6 of 10 – Executive agencies and other public bodies

Executive agencies are part of government departments. However, they are responsible for government services rather than deciding policy. There are 412 agencies and other public bodies at the time of writing, so far too many to cover here. However, if you continue reading, you will be able to find out about a few of them.

**Gambling Commission** – They license and regulate the people and businesses that provide gambling in Great Britain, including the National Lottery. By regulating gambling they prevent gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, or being used to support crime, ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way. They also protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling. Visit the Gambling Commission website below:

[Gambling Commission](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/home.aspx)

**Care Quality Commission** – They are the independent regulators of health and adult social care in England. They make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and their role is to encourage care services to improve. Visit their website below:

[Care Quality Commission](https://www.cqc.org.uk/)

**DVLA** – The DVLA maintains the registration and licensing of drivers in Great Britain and the registration and licensing of vehicles, together with the collection and enforcement of vehicle tax in the UK. This information is used to improve road safety, reduce vehicle related crime, support environmental initiatives and limit vehicle tax evasion. Visit the DVLA website below:

[About Us – DVLA](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency/about)

7 of 10 – Question 1

Categorise the following organisations as either, **Government departments**, **Non-ministerial departments** or **Executive Agency & other public bodies**:

Care Quality Commission

CPS

Defra

Department of Health

DVLA

Forestry Commission

Gambling Commission

HM Revenue and Customs

HM Treasury

Home Office

Imperial War Museum

Ministry of Justice

Ofsted

Ordnance Survey

The Royal Mint

The correct answers are shown in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Department | Organisations |
| Government departments | Defra  Department of Health  HM Treasury  Home Office  Ministry of Justice |
| Non-ministerial departments | CPS  Forestry Commission  HM Revenue and Customs  Ofsted  Ordnance Survey |
| Executive Agency & other public bodies | Care Quality Commission  DVLA  Gambling Commission  Imperial War Museum  The Royal Mint |

8 of 10 – Civil Service

The Civil Service undertakes the practical and administrative work of the Government. In this way they are involved in policy making as members of the civil service often complete the research required in the discussion stages of policy creation.

The Civil Service is co-ordinated and managed by the Prime Minister.

Many civil servants provide services direct to the public e.g. paying benefits and pensions, and issuing driving licences.

9 of 10 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on the role of government departments in creating policy.

You should now be able to:

* Identify the difference between the Prime Minister, Ministers and Government departments
* Explain the role of a variety of different government departments

If you are unsure or have any questions about any of these topics, speak to your tutor for more help.