



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

3 July 1984

DIRECT ENTRY PRINCIPAL COMPETITION

The Prime Minister has considered Lord Gowrie's further minute of 28 June about his proposal to hold a direct entry Principal competition.

The Prime Minister is not persuaded of the case for holding such a competition this year, which she feels would not only be expensive but also unlikely to secure the number and in particular the quality of external recruits sought. Subject to any further comments your Minister may have, the Prime Minister would prefer the shortfall to be met from a competition open to internal candidates of any Department, age or grade, but not to external candidates.

*SB*  
The Prime Minister agrees with Lord Gowrie that the removal of internal barriers to promotion is likely to have a beneficial effect on morale. She would be grateful for a report from him as soon as possible on how more general progress might be made in this area, so as to create better opportunities for the more able Civil Servants.

David Barclay

Mrs. Mary Brown,  
Management and Personnel Office.

cc NO



# CABINET OFFICE

From the Minister of State

Lord Gowrie

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

Great George Street  
London SW1P 3AL  
Telephone 01-233 8610

David Barclay Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

Prime Minister (2)

This seems very satisfactory. 6 July 1984

Content?

Dear David,

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## DIRECT ENTRY PRINCIPAL COMPETITION

In your letter of 3 July you said that the Prime Minister was not persuaded of the case for holding a Direct Entry Principal Competition this year but would prefer a competition open only to internal candidates.

Lord Gowrie is content to proceed on this basis. He still has some reservations, as do one or two major departments, as to whether all vacancies can be filled in this way but accepts that there are no certainties in any of this.

The structure of such a competition will need some thought if it is not to lead to a wasteful overlap with other competitions. We have just re-modelled the AT/HEOD scheme to open it to a wider field of applicants. From this year the upper age limit for the competition will be raised to 32, and direct entry to HEOD level will be permitted. The competition will be open to all serving junior civil servants in this age band. Successful candidates are expected to reach Principal in 4-5 years if offered an AT post and 2-3 years if offered an HEOD post. Lord Gowrie considers that the best way to proceed will be to direct candidates under 32 into the AT/HEOD competition, and those 32 or over into the Principal competition. At the same time we will emphasise that if an outstanding candidate was identified in the AT/HEOD competition the selection board could recommend immediate promotion to Principal.

Lord Gowrie intends to mount a major publicity campaign within the Civil Service to advertise these opportunities. This is being launched immediately so that the competitions can be held in the autumn.

The Prime Minister also asked how we could deal more generally with the removal of internal barriers to the promotion of able civil servants. The scrutiny of internal talent has been looking at precisely this area and Lord Gowrie intends to let the Prime Minister have a report on its conclusions next month. Work has also been done on how to tackle promotion blockages and improve early retirement mechanisms. Lord Gowrie will be meeting the Minister of State (Treasury) shortly to consider these proposals with the aim of making a subsequent report to the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,

Mary

MRS M E BROWN  
Private Secretary

Civil Service Long Term Post. Pt 16.



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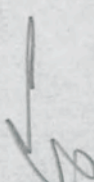
Direct Entry Principal  
Competition

Thank you for your letter of 6 July, which the Prime Minister considered over the weekend.

The Prime Minister is content for Lord Gowrie to proceed as proposed.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mike Corcoran (Mr. Hayhoe's office, HMT) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

David Barclay



Mrs Mary Brown  
Lord Gowrie's Office.