

# Profile on Jeremy Hunt: The new UK Chancellor of the Exchequer

Jeremy Hunt is no stranger to Government roles, having spent his 17-year career in politics in a variety of Cabinet jobs.

The MP for South West Surrey was elected to his safe Conservative seat in 2005 after Virginia Bottomley, the now Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone, stepped down.

His first Cabinet role, as culture secretary, was given to him following the 2010 general election which saw the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats form a coalition government.

During his two-year stint in the role, he was praised for the hugely successful London Olympics, but also faced calls to resign over his role in the BSkyB takeover bid.

Then Labour leader Ed Miliband said Mr Hunt should quit over his contacts with Rupert Murdoch's media empire while he was considering the bid, which was later withdrawn.

## The NHS

Mr Hunt was promoted to health secretary during a cabinet reshuffle in 2012, succeeding Andrew Lansley.

As health secretary, he secured a £20 billion-a-year funding increase for the NHS and expanded his department to include social care.

But his time in office was controversial and saw him face criticism from doctors and nurses due to the pressures on the NHS.

His scrapping of junior doctors' overtime pay led to multiple strikes by medical staff across the UK.

Despite calls to resign, he stayed put, later being made foreign secretary after the shock resignation of Boris Johnson in 2018.

## **Brexit**

In the Brexit referendum, Mr Hunt campaigned to remain in the EU.

Following the resignation of prime minister Theresa May in 2019, he announced he would campaign to become leader of the Conservative Party.

He was the runner-up in the race, losing to Mr Johnson.

The new PM then offered Mr Hunt the job of defence secretary after Dominic Raab was chosen as the new foreign secretary, but he declined it.

Mr Hunt said at the time on Twitter: "I would have been honoured to carry on my work at the FCO but understand the need for a new PM to choose his team.

"BJ kindly offered me another role but after 9 yrs in Cabinet & over 300 cab mtgs, now is the time to return 2 backbenches from where PM will have my full support."

He then stepped back from the front benches for several years, focusing on his role as chairman of the Health and Social Care Committee, a role he was elected to at the beginning of 2020.

He used his position to make a number of critical interventions on the Government's handling of the Covid pandemic, and was supportive of the nation going into lockdown to curb the spread of the virus.

## Tory leadership race

Following the resignation of Mr Johnson as PM earlier this year, Mr Hunt announced his intention to again run for the Tory leadership.

But he was eliminated from the race after the first round of voting by Tory MPs.

## Personal life

Earlier this year, Mr Hunt revealed that he had had cancer and had since recovered.

He ran in Cancer Research UK's Race for Life to raise money for cancer charities.

The son of Admiral Sir Nicholas Hunt, he enjoyed a privileged upbringing that saw him educated at the prestigious Charterhouse school.

He went on to read philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford, where he was a contemporary of former prime minister David Cameron and Mr Johnson.

Mr Hunt later set up educational publishing firm Hotcourses, which was then sold to Australian outfit IDP Education for £30.1 million in 2017.

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