



## CaSE Press Release

24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### Secretaries of State need to meet with their Chief Scientific Advisers

A series of parliamentary questions asked by the Shadow Conservative Minister for Science, Adam Afriyie MP, has revealed a worrying paucity of face-to-face meetings taking place between Secretaries of State and their Chief Scientific Advisers. When asked how many times they met with their departmental Chief Scientific Adviser and the Government Chief Scientific Adviser over the last year:

- The Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for International Development only met with their departmental Chief Scientific Adviser once.
- Eight Secretaries of State admitted to having not met with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Beddington, at all.

Responding to this, the Campaign for Science & Engineering's Director, Nick Dusic said:

"To appoint a Chief Scientific Adviser, but then only have sporadic meetings with them indicates a 'two steps forward one step back approach' to improving scientific advice. Whoever forms the next government must ensure that Secretaries of States have regular meetings with their Departmental Chief Scientific Adviser and meet with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser. Without adequate interactions, Secretaries of State will not fully consider the contribution and role of science and engineering in policymaking."

HM Treasury has yet to appoint a departmental Chief Scientific Adviser. In response to the parliamentary question by Afriyie, the Treasury refused to reveal how many times the Chancellor met with Professor Beddington, the Government Chief Scientific Adviser. Responding, Nick Dusic said:

"The lack of a Chief Scientific Adviser at the Treasury is worrying because of the critical role it plays within government. The Treasury was central to the development of the Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014, which remains the most important science policy document in the UK. Whoever is the Chancellor after the Election should appoint a Chief Scientific Adviser to ensure that the best available evidence and advice informs the government's investment in science and innovation."

## Ends

### Notes to editors

1. For full responses of all departments to the parliamentary questions see the CaSE blog <http://blog.sciencecampaign.org.uk/?p=559> or visit TheyWorkforYou.com: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/search/?s=adviser&from=&to=&person=afriyie&department=&party=&section=&column=>
2. For further comment, please contact Nick Dusic, Director of CaSE, on 020 7679 4995 or 07749 953041.
3. Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found on our website: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/>