



BRIEFING PAPER

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Prime Ministers

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Summary

This note lists the Prime Ministers that have served in the United Kingdom, since 1721.

It notes debate and discussion that took place in the House of Commons, and the media, when the identity of the Prime Minister changed during the course of a Parliament, rather than at a general election, since 1900.

Finally, it lists the locations of Prime Ministerial papers, where known.

Since 1945, the UK has had 15 Prime Ministers.

Nine of those Prime ministers first took office between elections (including Winston Churchill in 1940). Four of these continued in office following a general election whilst they were Prime Minister; and one, Winston Churchill, became Prime Minister again, after a period in Opposition.

The other six first entered office after a general election (one of these, Harold Wilson, became Prime Minister again, after a period in Opposition). The tables below show when they came to office and general elections, whether or not the Prime Minister changed as a result of the general election.

Table 1: Prime Ministers, 1945-1979

10 May 1940	Winston Churchill formed Government following Neville Chamberlain's resignation
05 July 1945	Clement Attlee formed Government
23 February 1950	Clement Attlee continued as Prime Minister
25 October 1951	Winston Churchill formed Government
05 April 1955	Anthony Eden formed Government following Winston Churchill's resignation
26 May 1955	Anthony Eden continued as Prime Minister
09 January 1957	Harold MacMillan formed Government following Anthony Eden's resignation
08 October 1959	Harold MacMillan continued as Prime Minister
18 October 1963	Sir Alec Douglas Home formed Government following Harold MacMillan's resignation
15 October 1964	Harold Wilson formed Government
31 March 1966	Harold Wilson continued as Prime Minister
18 June 1970	Edward Heath formed Government
28 February 1974	Harold Wilson formed Government
10 October 1974	Harold Wilson continued as Prime Minister
05 April 1976	James Callaghan formed Government following Harold Wilson's resignation

Key

Election - change of Prime Minister

Election - no change of Prime Minister

Mid-term change of Prime Minister

Table 2: Prime Ministers, 1979-2019

03 May 1979	Margaret Thatcher formed Government
09 June 1983	Margaret Thatcher continued as Prime Minister
11 June 1987	Margaret Thatcher continued as Prime Minister
28 November 1990	John Major formed Government following Margaret Thatcher's resignation
09 April 1992	John Major continued as Prime Minister
01 May 1997	Tony Blair formed Government
07 June 2001	Tony Blair continued as Prime Minister
05 May 2005	Tony Blair continued as Prime Minister
27 June 2007	Gordon Brown formed Government following Tony Blair's resignation
06 May 2010	David Cameron formed Government
05 May 2015	David Cameron continued as Prime Minister
13 July 2016	Theresa May formed Government following David Cameron's resignation
08 June 2017	Theresa May continued as Prime Minister
24 July 2019	Boris Johnson formed Government following Theresa May's resignation

Key

Election - change of Prime Minister
Election - no change of Prime Minister
Mid-term change of Prime Minister

1. Chronological list of Prime Ministers

The following list of Prime Ministers is presented chronologically so Prime Ministers who served more than one distinct term appear more than once. Second and subsequent terms are noted in italics. For the list of twentieth century Prime Ministers, the Prime Ministers with emboldened names became Prime Minister at a time other than a general election:

1.1 Eighteenth Century Prime Ministers, period of office and political party

Sir Robert Walpole	1721-42	Whig
Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington	1742-43	Whig
Henry Pelham	1743-54	Whig
Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle	1754-56	Whig
William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire	1756-57	Whig
<i>Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle</i>	<i>1757-62</i>	<i>Whig</i>
John Stuart, Earl of Bute	1762-63	Tory
George Grenville	1763-65	Whig
Charles Wentworth, Marquess of Rockingham	1765-66	Whig
The Earl of Chatham, William Pitt 'The Elder'	1766-68	Whig
Augustus Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton	1768-70	Whig
Lord North	1770-82	Tory
<i>Charles Wentworth, Marquess of Rockingham</i>	<i>1782</i>	<i>Whig</i>
William Petty, Earl of Shelburne	1782-83	Whig
William Bentinck, Duke of Portland	1783	Whig

1.2 Nineteenth Century Prime Ministers, period of office and political party

William Pitt 'The Younger'	1783-1801	Tory
Henry Addington	1801-04	Tory
<i>William Pitt 'The Younger'</i>	<i>1804-06</i>	<i>Tory</i>
William Wyndam Grenville, Lord Grenville	1806-07	Whig
<i>William Bentinck, Duke of Portland</i>	<i>1807-09</i>	<i>Whig</i>
Spencer Perceval	1809-12	Tory
Robert Banks Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool	1812-27	Tory
George Canning	1827	Tory
Frederick Robinson, Viscount Goderich	1827-28	Tory
Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington	1828-30	Tory
Earl Grey	1830-34	Whig
William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne	1834	Whig
Sir Robert Peel	1834-35	Tory
<i>William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne</i>	<i>1835-41</i>	<i>Whig</i>
Sir Robert Peel	1841-46	Tory
Earl Russell	1846-51	Liberal
The Earl of Derby	1852	Conservative
Earl of Aberdeen	1852-55	Tory

Viscount Palmerston	1855-58	Liberal
<i>The Earl of Derby</i>	<i>1858-59</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
<i>Viscount Palmerston</i>	<i>1859-65</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
<i>Earl Russell</i>	<i>1865-66</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
<i>The Earl of Derby</i>	<i>1866-68</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
Benjamin Disraeli	1868	Conservative
William Ewart Gladstone	1868-74	Liberal
<i>Benjamin Disraeli</i>	<i>1874-80</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
<i>William Ewart Gladstone</i>	<i>1880-85</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Marquess of Salisbury)	1885-86	Conservative
<i>William Ewart Gladstone</i>	<i>1886</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
<i>Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Marquess of Salisbury)</i>	<i>1886-92</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
<i>William Ewart Gladstone</i>	<i>1892-94</i>	<i>Liberal</i>
The Earl of Rosebery	1894-95	Liberal
<i>Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Marquess of Salisbury)</i>	<i>1895-1902</i>	<i>Conservative</i>

1.3 Twentieth Century Prime Ministers, period of office and political party

<i>Marquess of Salisbury</i>	<i>1895-1902</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
Arthur Balfour	1902-05	Conservative
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	1905-08	Liberal
Herbert Asquith	1908-16	Liberal
David Lloyd George	1916-22	Liberal
Andrew Bonar Law	1922-23	Conservative
Stanley Baldwin	1923	Conservative
Ramsay MacDonald	1924	Labour
<i>Stanley Baldwin</i>	<i>1924-29</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
<i>James Ramsay MacDonald</i>	<i>1929-35</i>	<i>Labour</i>
<i>Stanley Baldwin</i>	<i>1935-37</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
Neville Chamberlain	1937-40	Conservative
Sir Winston Churchill	1940-45	Conservative
Clement Richard Attlee	1945-51	Labour
<i>Sir Winston Churchill</i>	<i>1951-55</i>	<i>Conservative</i>
Anthony Eden	1955-57	Conservative
Harold Macmillan	1957-63	Conservative
Sir Alec Douglas-Home	1963-64	Conservative
Harold Wilson	1964-70	Labour
Edward Heath	1970-74	Conservative
<i>Harold Wilson</i>	<i>1974-76</i>	<i>Labour</i>
James Callaghan	1976-79	Labour
Margaret Thatcher	1979-90	Conservative
John Major	1990-97	Conservative
Tony Blair	1997-2007	Labour

1.4 21st Century Prime Ministers, period of office and political party

Tony Blair	1997-2007	Labour
Gordon Brown	2007-10	Labour
David Cameron	2010-16	Conservative
Theresa May	2016-19	Conservative
Boris Johnson	2019-	Conservative

Source: 10 Downing Street, [*Prime Ministers in History*](#)

2. Information relating to changes in Prime Minister between elections

2.1 Salisbury/Balfour, 1902

On 11 July 1902 Arthur Balfour succeeded Lord Salisbury, his uncle, as Conservative Prime Minister, two years after the previous election. There was no confidence vote. The next day's business (14 July) started with Questions (not restricted to a single department in those days). Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then Leader of the Opposition, interrupted Questions to make a short speech of welcome. Later, Balfour said a few words about Salisbury and Campbell-Bannerman responded with a tribute of his own to the outgoing Prime Minister.¹

2.2 Balfour/Campbell-Bannerman, 1905

This was an unusual example of a Prime Minister being replaced mid-term by a successor from another party. On 4 December 1905, Arthur Balfour resigned. The King invited the Liberals under Henry Campbell-Bannerman to form a government. Parliament was prorogued when the new Government took office. Whilst prorogued, Parliament was dissolved and a general election was called.² As a result, Campbell-Bannerman first appeared in the Commons as Prime Minister after an election.

2.3 Campbell-Bannerman/Asquith, 1908

In early April 1908, Henry Campbell-Bannerman retired on grounds of declining health and Herbert Asquith took over.³ There was no confidence vote. Asquith was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time. On 6 April 1908, a Monday, he rose after Questions to inform the House that the Prime Minister had resigned over the weekend. He paid tribute to him and said that, in its sadness over his departure and his condition, the House would be unable to carry out any business and should therefore adjourn for a week and a day. It would then resume for a day, to conclude some formal business, and then go into the Easter recess. Arthur Balfour then spoke for the Opposition, to express sadness over Campbell-Bannerman's retirement and to agree to the adjournment. Asquith moved two motions, one to adjourn the House until 14 April 1908, and another to allow committees to meet notwithstanding the adjournment.⁴

¹ [HC Deb 14 July 1902 cc127-129](#)

² Parliament was prorogued to 30 October 1905, on 11 August ([HL Deb 11 August 1906 cc990-993](#)). It was further prorogued to 12 December by proclamation, on 23 October; then further prorogued to 15 January 1906, by proclamation on 11 December 1905. On 8 January 1906 the King issued a proclamation dissolving Parliament (CJ 1906 2)

³ Campbell-Bannerman resigned on 5 April 1908; and Asquith became Prime Minister on 5 April 1908, after meeting the King in Biarritz

⁴ [HC Deb 6 April 1908 cc958-960](#)

On 14 April 1908 much formal business was completed, and then the Easter adjournment was moved. The adjournment debate took the form of a number of questions to Ministers, with long exchanges on the replies, but none of these concerned the new Government.⁵

By the time the House resumed after the recess, on 27 April 1908, Campbell-Bannerman had died. Asquith, opened the tributes to the former Prime Minister with a reference to the funeral in Westminster Abbey. He paid a tribute to his predecessor, and this was followed by responses from the opposition parties and a motion to adjourn.⁶

2.4 Asquith/Lloyd George, 1916

David Lloyd George became Prime Minister on the resignation of Asquith, during World War I:

Following a hostile press campaign, Asquith resigned and the more dynamic Lloyd George became Prime Minister.⁷

2.5 Lloyd George/Bonar Law, 1922

David Lloyd George resigned as Prime Minister on 19 October 1922, following the fall of the post-war coalition. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by Andrew Bonar Law, who almost immediately sought a general election. Parliament was dissolved by proclamation on 26 October 1922, and Bonar Law's Conservatives were returned with a majority.

2.6 Bonar Law/Baldwin, 1923

Stanley Baldwin became Prime Minister for the first time in 1923 following the resignation of Andrew Bonar Law for health reasons.⁸ Tributes were paid in the House, led by Ramsay MacDonald, and the new Prime Minister was welcomed.⁹

2.7 Baldwin/MacDonald, 1924

Ramsay MacDonald did not become Prime Minister immediately after the General Election in December 1923. The election in December 1923 failed to give the then Conservative Government a majority. Stanley Baldwin continued as Prime Minister but an amendment, expressing no confidence in the Government, was made to the motion on the King's Speech. JR Clynes, as chairman of the Labour Party, moved the amendment to the King's Speech on 17 January,¹⁰ and when the debate concluded on 21 January, the amendment was carried.¹¹ The amendment read: "It is our duty respectfully to submit to your Majesty

⁵ [HC Deb 14 April 1908 cc1001-1020](#)

⁶ [HC Deb 27 April 1908 cc1033-1040](#)

⁷ D Englefield, J Seaton and I White, *Facts about the British Prime Ministers*, Mansell, 1995, p230

⁸ *Ibid*, p253

⁹ HC Deb 28 May 1923 vol 164 c845

¹⁰ [HC Deb 17 January 1924 cc266-386](#)

¹¹ [HC Deb 21 January 1924 cc532-685](#)

that your Majesty's present advisers have not the confidence of this House"¹²

On 22 January 1924 the Prime Minister, Baldwin, moved an adjournment immediately after Questions. He announced at the start of his speech that the Government had tendered its resignation, which had been accepted and would become effective once the new Government was in place. The House would then return on 12 February 1924.¹³

When the House returned there were Questions followed by another Prime Ministerial adjournment motion. The new Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, opened with a speech on Labour Government policy, and there followed a long debate stretching over three days about that policy and the nature of the new administration. There were special concerns over the character of the first Labour Government and in particular its relationship with the Socialist International.¹⁴

2.8 MacDonald/Baldwin, 1935

Declining health and criticism over his handling of the international situation led to Ramsay MacDonald's resignation in May 1935 with Stanley Baldwin, once again, becoming Prime Minister of the National Government after the House returned from the Whitsun recess. There were no tribute motions on this occasion.

The 1935 general election, called by Baldwin, was held on 14 November 1935.

2.9 Baldwin/Chamberlain, 1937

After Stanley Baldwin's retirement on 28 May 1937, the House paid tributes to him and the new Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain on 31 May 1937. This debate was also not on any motion. Once again, the tributes were cordial and did not involve calls for an election.¹⁵

2.10 Chamberlain/Churchill, 1940

When Winston Churchill became Prime Minister, succeeding Neville Chamberlain, there was a debate on the following confidence motion:

That this House welcomes the formation of a Government representing the united and inflexible resolve of the nation to prosecute the war with Germany to a victorious conclusion.¹⁶

Although the formation of the Government of national unity, led by Churchill, in 1940 was followed by such a confidence motion, there have been no further examples of confidence motions following changes of Prime Minister mid-Parliament, since then.

¹² HC Deb 17 January 1924 c301

¹³ [HC Deb 22 January 1924 cc696-707](#)

¹⁴ [HC Deb 12 February 1924 cc746ff](#), [13 February 1924 cc844-926](#), [14 February 1924 cc1015-1174](#)

¹⁵ [HC Deb 31 May 1937 cc682-687](#)

¹⁶ [HC Deb 13 May 1940 c1501-1525](#)

2.11 Churchill/Eden, 1955

When Winston Churchill retired on 6 April 1955, the House had a short debate, paying tribute to the retiring Prime Minister and welcoming Anthony Eden as his successor.¹⁷ There was no call for an immediate election. However, Eden called one, which was held on 26 May 1955.

2.12 Eden/Macmillan, 1957

Anthony Eden retired on 9 January 1957 while the House was in recess, to be succeeded by Harold Macmillan. On 22 January 1957, there was a short debate, largely prompted by the retiring Eden's illness, in which the leaders of opposition parties paid tribute to Eden, wished him well and welcomed Macmillan to the job. There was no motion of confidence for this debate, or of any other kind. There was also no call for an election.¹⁸

2.13 Macmillan/Douglas-Home, 1963

Harold Macmillan resigned on 18 October 1963, while the House was in recess. There was some controversy about an attempt by the Government to prorogue immediately after the summer recess, evading debate until after the Queen's Speech. In the end they agreed to an adjournment debate, but not a motion of confidence.¹⁹

During the debate, the Leader of the Opposition, Harold Wilson, said this:

Mr Wilson: When we had a change of Government in 1955 when Sir Anthony Eden, as he then was, became Prime Minister, he announced as his reason for going to the country that there had been a change of Prime Minister.²⁰

Macmillan's successor, Sir Alec Douglas-Home made his first appearance in the House as Prime Minister on 12 November 1963. Mr Wilson, replying to the Queen's speech said this:

Mr Wilson:In a television broadcast, the Prime Minister said that he was greatly tempted to have an election – I think that was his phrase – and he was reported yesterday to have said that he is spoiling for a fight. He can have one. What is stopping him? It is not this programme of legislation in the Gracious Speech. It is not the state of international negotiations. One thing only gives him pause, the thought of Luton, of Stratford, of the earlier by-elections, and the lessons they carry in terms of election defeat.²¹

Sir Alec Douglas Home did not respond to these comments in his reply.

¹⁷ [HC Deb 6 April 1955 c1181-1188](#)

¹⁸ [HC Deb 22 Jan 1957 cc36-40](#)

¹⁹ [HC Deb 24 Oct 1963 cc902-976](#)

²⁰ HC Deb 24 Oct 1963 c905

²¹ HC Deb 12 Nov 1963 c20

2.14 Wilson/Callaghan, 1976

Harold Wilson announced his resignation on Tuesday 16 March 1976 and took Prime Minister's Questions. The then Leader of the Opposition, Margaret Thatcher also asked if there would be an election:

Mrs Thatcher: In spite of the political battles, we wish the Prime Minister well, personally, on his retirement. His decision has come at a time of great financial difficulty and of unprecedented parliamentary events. Is he aware that the best way to resolve the uncertainty and to give the new Prime Minister the authority required would be to put the matter to the people for their vote?

The Prime Minister: I thank the right hon. Lady for her opening words. They are in accordance with the traditions of this House. She is absolutely right, in that, whatever differences may divide us in this House on policy and political philosophy, on occasions such as this nice, kind words like hers have been uttered. I hope that I shall not spoil the atmosphere by saying that I totally reject the second part of her question – I am not sure that she is all that keen on it either [*interruption*]. My reason for saying that is that there has been a certain degree of hubris about recent by-elections. The right hon. Lady should remember that the Conservatives lost Bromsgrove the year after they came to office and that a majority of 11,800 was turned into a majority, the other way, of 1,800. Macclesfield was nearly as bad, in the following year. She will find that the swings in the recent by-elections are much smaller than is normal at this stage in a Government's life.²²

James Callaghan's first day coincided with Prime Minister's Questions.²³ There was no motion of confidence at any point.

2.15 Thatcher/Major, 1990

Margaret Thatcher resigned on Thursday 22 November 1990. She took Prime Ministers Questions on that day and was asked by Neil Kinnock if there would be a general election as a result of her relinquishing of the premiership:

Mr. Kinnock: May I pay tribute to the Prime Minister, and to the decision that she made this morning? By that, she showed that she amounts to more than those who have turned on her in recent days. The right hon. Lady, I know, considers the principle of choice extremely important, and rightly so. Does she agree that the people of Britain should now be given the power of choice in a general election?

The Prime Minister: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his earlier comments. The reply to his later question is no--no more than we had a general election when Mr. Wilson was replaced by Mr. Callaghan.²⁴

There was also a no confidence motion on the same day, which was rejected by 367 to 247.²⁵

²² [HC Deb 16 Mar 1976 c1123](#)

²³ [HC Deb 6 April 1976 cc223ff](#)

²⁴ [HC Deb 22 November 1990 c420](#)

²⁵ [HC Deb 22 November 1990 cc439-518](#)

When John Major took over there was a day of normal business, with a focus on the Iraq crisis and then some legislation. He took Prime Ministers Questions on his second day.²⁶

2.16 Blair/Brown 2007

On 10 May 2007 Tony Blair announced that he would stand down as Prime Minister on 27 June.²⁷ This triggered a Labour Party Leadership contest. Both Gordon Brown and John McDonnell put their names forward. However, John McDonnell failed to receive sufficient nominations from within the party and Gordon Brown's appointment as Labour leader was effectively uncontested.²⁸

In his Labour Party leadership acceptance speech on 24 June 2007 Gordon Brown fuelled speculation of an early poll by announcing that Douglas Alexander would be his general election campaign coordinator.²⁹

On 25 June 2007 David Cameron urged Gordon Brown to call a 'snap election':

If Gordon Brown is serious about wanting to listen to the people of this country then he should call a general election right now...Gordon Brown has no mandate to be prime minister and he cannot be the change the country needs...People want real change and the next general election can't come soon enough so that they have an opportunity to vote for it".³⁰

Tony Blair formally resigned on Wednesday 27 June 2007 after taking Prime Minister's Questions for the last time. David Cameron led a tribute to Tony Blair:

Mr. Cameron: On behalf of everyone on these Benches, may I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his remarkable achievement of being Prime Minister for 10 years? [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear."] For all the heated battles across the Dispatch Box, for 13 years he has led his party, for 10 years he has led our country, and no one can be in any doubt about the huge efforts he has made in public service. He has considerable achievements to his credit, whether it is peace in Northern Ireland or his work in the developing world, which will endure. I am sure that life in the public eye has sometimes been tough on his family, so on behalf of my party may I wish him and his family well, and wish him every success in whatever he does in future?³¹

Gordon Brown's first Prime Minister's Questions took place the following week on 4 July 2007; the main issues discussed were security and terrorism.³²

Speculation about an early election continued in the media throughout the summer.³³ In his address at the Conservative party conference in

²⁶ [HC Deb 29 November 1990 cc1011ff](#)

²⁷ BBC News, [Blair will stand down on 27 June](#), 10 May 2007

²⁸ BBC News, [Brown 'humbled' by Labour backing](#), 17 May 2007

²⁹ BBC News, [Labour must have soul, says Brown](#), 24 June 2007

³⁰ H Mulholland, "[Cameron challenges Brown to call snap election](#)", *Guardian*, 25 June 2007

³¹ [HC Deb 27 June 2007 c326](#)

³² [HC Deb 4 July 2007 cc950-61](#)

³³ BBC News, [How election fever developed](#), 7 October 2007

October David Cameron again challenged Gordon Brown to call an election:

Let the people decide who can make the changes that we really need in our country. Call that election... We will fight. Britain will win.³⁴

However, on 6 October 2007 Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he would not hold an autumn election as he wanted a chance to implement his "vision" for the country and to develop his policies further.³⁵

2.17 Cameron/May 2016

On 24 June 2016, the day after the UK's referendum on its continued membership of the European Union, David Cameron announced his resignation. He stated that in his view, the aim should be to have a new Prime Minister in place by the start of the Conservative Party Conference in October 2016.³⁶

Theresa May was elected leader of the Conservative Party on 11 July 2016, following a leadership contest in which the other four candidates were eliminated or withdrew before the final two candidates could be put to the wider Conservative Party membership.³⁷ David Cameron announced that he would stand down after Prime Minister's Questions on 13 July 2016.³⁸

The *Independent* reported that opposition parties called for a general election at this time.³⁹

Theresa May made her first appearance at the despatch box, as Prime Minister, on 18 July 2016.⁴⁰

2.18 May/Johnson

Theresa May came under pressure as a result of opposition within the Conservative Party to the Withdrawal Agreement that she had negotiated with the European Union.

She faced a vote of no confidence as party leader on 12 December 2018. She won this vote, amongst Conservative MPs, by 200 votes to 117.⁴¹

She also faced a vote of no confidence in her Government. On 16 January 2019, the motion "That this House has no confidence in Her Majesty's Government" was defeated by 325 votes to 306.⁴²

³⁴ BBC News, [Let the people decide, Cameron](#), 3 October 2007

³⁵ BBC News, [Brown rules out autumn election](#), 6 October 2007

³⁶ Heather Stewart, Rowena Mason and Rajeev Syal, "[David Cameron resigns after UK votes to leave European Union](#)", *Guardian*, 24 June 2016

³⁷ Anushka Asthana, Rowena Mason and Jessica Elgot, "[Theresa May to become new PM after Tory rival Leadsom withdraws](#)", *Guardian*, 12 July 2016

³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ Jon Stone, "[Opposition parties call for early general election following Theresa May 'coronation'](#)", *Independent*, 11 July 2016

⁴⁰ [HC Deb 18 July 2016 c559ff](#)

⁴¹ BBC News, [Theresa May survives confidence vote of Tory MPs](#), 12 December 2018

⁴² [HC Deb 16 January 2019 cc1171-1273](#)

Pressure continued and on 24 May 2019, she announced her intention to stand down as leader of the Conservative Party. She said that she would step down as leader of the party on 7 June.⁴³

The 1922 Committee confirmed the detailed rules for the Conservative Party leadership contest that was about to get underway. It was confirmed that, following ballots among MPs to select two candidates, a vote among party members would be held, and that the result would be announced on 23 July 2019.⁴⁴

On 23 July 2019, Boris Johnson was elected as the Leader of the Conservative Party.

At Mrs May's last Prime Minister's Questions on 24 July, Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that Mr Johnson should call a general election:

Given that her successor has no mandate from the people—no mandate on which to move into office—does she not agree that the best thing that the right hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip could do later on today when he takes office is to call a general election and let the people decide their future?

Mrs May did not agree.

In the afternoon of 24 July 2019, Mrs May went to Buckingham Palace to resign and shortly afterwards, Mr Johnson also went to the Palace and was asked to form a government.

2.19 Analysis

Ben Worthy addressed questions about the performance of “takeover” Prime Ministers, those that succeeded in mid-term, in his paper “Ending in Failure? The Performance of ‘Takeover’ Prime Ministers 1916-2016”.⁴⁵

⁴³ Heather Stewart, “[Theresa May announces she will resign on 7 June](#)”, *Guardian*, 24 May 2019

⁴⁴ House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, [Leadership Elections: Conservative Party](#), SN01366, 19 July 2019

⁴⁵ Ben Worthy, “Ending in Failure? The Performance of ‘Takeover’ Prime Ministers 1916-2016”, *Political Quarterly*, October-December 2016, Volume 87, Issue 4, pp509-517

3. Prime Ministerial Papers

3.1 Official Papers:

The National Archives holds the official papers of successive Prime Ministers from 1916 (beginning with David Lloyd George) until the early 1980s.⁴⁶

The National Archives also preserves digital government information by regularly archiving UK central government websites.⁴⁷

For example, dated versions (or 'snapshots') of the www.number10.gov.uk website during Tony Blair's administration, are available on the National Archives website at the following: [Number10-Tony Blair Archive](#)

3.2 Personal and Private Papers:

Margaret Thatcher's papers are held at Churchill College, Cambridge.

Contact details in respect of the papers are:

Andrew Riley
Archivist/Thatcher Papers
Churchill Archives Centre
Churchill College
Cambridge CB3 0DS

E-mail: Thatcher.Archives@chu.cam.ac.uk

Sir Winston Churchill's papers are also kept at Churchill College, Cambridge.

Harold Wilson's papers are held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Bodleian Library,
Broad Street,
Oxford
OX1 3BG

Phone: 01865 277000

Email: enquiries@bodley.ox.ac.uk

Harold Macmillan's papers are also held at the Bodleian Library.

Sir Anthony Eden's papers, ('The Avon papers'), are held at the University of Birmingham

Special Collections,
Main Library,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston,
Birmingham,
B15 2TT

⁴⁶ The National Archives, [Prime Minister's Office records](#)

⁴⁷ The National Archives, [UK Government Web Archive](#)

Phone: +44 (0) 121 414 5838/9

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