



## BRIEFING PAPER

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# Conservative Party and officials since 1975

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This List notes Conservative Party leaders and officials since 1975.

### Further reading

[Conservative Party website](#)

[Conservative Party structure and organisation \[pdf\]](#)

[Constitution of the Conservative Party](#): includes leadership election rules and procedures for selecting candidates.

Oliver Letwin, *Hearts and Minds: The Battle for the Conservative Party from Thatcher to the Present*, Biteback, 2017

Tim Bale, *The Conservative Party: From Thatcher to Cameron*, Polity Press, 2016

Robert Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Major*, Faber & Faber, 2011

### Leadership elections

The Commons Library briefing [Leadership Elections: Conservative Party](#), 11 July 2016, looks at the current and previous rules for the election of the leader of the Conservative Party.

### Current state of the parties

The current composition of the House of Commons and links to the websites of all the parties represented in the Commons can be found on the [Parliament website: current state of the parties](#).

## Conservative Party leaders and officials since 1975

| Leader            | start    | end      |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Margaret Thatcher | Feb 1975 | Nov 1990 |
| John Major        | Nov 1990 | Jun 1997 |
| William Hague     | Jun 1997 | Sep 2001 |
| Iain Duncan Smith | Sep 2001 | Nov 2003 |
| Michael Howard    | Nov 2003 | Dec 2005 |
| David Cameron     | Dec 2005 | Jul 2016 |
| Theresa May       | Jul 2016 | Jun 2019 |
| Boris Johnson     | Jul 2019 | present  |

| Deputy Leader #  | start    | end       |
|------------------|----------|-----------|
| William Whitelaw | Feb 1975 | Aug 1991  |
| Peter Lilley     | Jun 1998 | Jun 1999  |
| Michael Ancram   | Sep 2001 | Dec 2005  |
| George Osborne * | Dec 2005 | July 2016 |
| William Hague *  | Dec 2009 | May 2015  |

# There has not always been a deputy leader and it is often an official title of a senior Conservative politician.

\* De-facto Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party

| Party Chair               | start        | end          | Ministerial Office  |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| Lord Thorneycroft         | Feb 1975     | Sep 1981     | not a Minister  |
| Cecil Parkinson           | May 1979     | Jun 1987     | Paymaster General *   |
| John Gummer               | Oct 1983     | Sep 1985     | Minister of State, Employment<br>Minister of State, Trade & Industry *                                |
| Norman Tebbit             | Sep 1985     | Jun 1987     | Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *<br>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *<br>Paymaster General |
| Peter Brooke              | Jun 1987     | Jul 1989     | Paymaster General   |
| Kenneth Baker             | Jul 1989     | Nov 1990     | Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *  |
| Chris Patten              | Nov 1990     | Apr 1992     | Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *  |
| Norman Fowler             | Apr 1992     | Jul 1994     | not a Minister  |
| Jeremy Hanley             | Jul 1994     | Jul 1995     | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| Brian Mawhinney           | Jul 1995     | May 1997     | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| Lord Parkinson            | Jun 1997     | Oct 1998     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Michael Ancram            | Oct 1998     | Sep 2001     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| David Davis               | Sep 2001     | Jul 2002     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Theresa May               | Sep 2002     | Nov 2003     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Liam Fox (Co-Chair)       | Nov 2003     | May 2005     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Lord Saatchi (Co-Chair)   | Nov 2003     | May 2005     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Francis Maude             | May 2005     | Jul 2007     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Caroline Spelman          | Jul 2007     | Jan 2009     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Eric Pickles              | Jan 2009     | May 2010     | Conservatives in opposition   |
| Lord Feldman (Co-Chair)   | May 2010     | Jul 2016     | not a Minister  |
| Baroness Warsi (Co-Chair) | May 2010     | Sep 2012     | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| Grant Shapps (Co-Chair)   | Sep 2012     | May 2016     | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| Patrick McLoughlin        | 14 Jul 2016  | 8 Jan 2018   | Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster *  |
| Brandon Lewis             | 8 Jan 2018   | 24 July 2019 | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| James Cleverly            | 24 July 2019 | present      | Minister without Portfolio *  |
| Ben Elliott               | 24 July 2019 | present      | not a Minister or MP  |

\* *Cabinet post*

| Chair 1922 Committee                      | start    | end      |
|---|----------|----------|
| Edward du Cann                            | Jul 1972 | Jul 1984 |
| Cranley Onslow                            | Jul 1984 | Apr 1992 |
| Marcus Fox                                | May 1992 | May 1997 |
| Archie Hamilton                           | May 1997 | Jun 2001 |
| Michael Spicer                            | Jun 2001 | May 2010 |
| Sir Graham Brady                          | Jun 2010 | May 2019 |
| Dame Cheryl Gillan                        | May 2019 | Sep 2019 |
| Sir Charles Walker                        | May 2019 | Sep 2019 |
| <a href="#">Sir Graham Brady [acting]</a> | Sep 2019 | present  |

**Sources:** DODS; MNIS; Press reports

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