



How politics works

Factsheet: Government



The **Government** is the name for the group of people who are **elected** to help run the country.



The **Government** has the power to make decisions that can affect the whole country and all the people who live here. They help make decisions about the **European Union** too.



The **Government** also joins with the governments of other countries to make decisions that can affect people around the world.



The **Government** is made up of **politicians** called **Members of Parliament (MPs)**.



We get to choose our **Government** by **voting** for the people we want to become **MPs** and work for us in **Parliament**. This is called **Democracy**.



The **election** to vote for the **Government** is called the **general election** and we usually have one about every 5 years.



The **Government** is made up of the **political party** who wins the **general election**.



The **political party** that comes second in a general election is called the **Official Opposition**. It is their job to keep an eye on what the **Government** does, and to say what they would do if they were the Government.



The **leader** of the **political party** who wins the **general election** becomes the **Prime Minister**.



The **Prime Minister** is the head of the **Government**. Once they are elected they get to live in the official house of the **Prime Minister**, which is **10, Downing Street**, in London.



The **Prime Minister's** first job is to choose the other people who will help run the **Government**. This group of people are called **Cabinet Ministers** and they help the **Prime Minister**.



The **Prime Minister** and **Government** have the job of coming up with ideas and plans about how to run the country. These ideas and plans are called **policies**.



The **Government** needs to think of lots of **policies** and so to make this easier the **Government** is split up into different offices, called **departments**.



The **Prime Minister** chooses **Cabinet Ministers** to run each of these **departments**. Together with the **Prime Minister** they make decisions about how they want to run the country.



Cabinet Ministers are responsible for different areas of life. The **department** responsible for the country's money is called the **Treasury** and the **Cabinet Minister** who runs the **Treasury** is called the **Chancellor of the Exchequer**.



This person lives next door to the **Prime Minister** at **11, Downing Street**.



There are lots of other **Cabinet Ministers** who run **departments** like the Department of Health, the Department of Transport, the Foreign Office, and the Home Office.



There are lots of other people who are not **politicians** who work in these Government **departments**. They are called **civil servants** and anyone can apply for these jobs.



To find out more about the work of the **Government** you can go to **www.direct.gov.uk**

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