

Investigations into staff gatherings in No10 Downing Street and the Department for Education

The Prime Minister has asked the Cabinet Secretary to carry out investigations into:

- allegations made of a gathering in No10 Downing Street on 27 November 2020;
- a gathering at the Department for Education on 10 December 2020; and
- allegations made of a gathering in No10 Downing Street on 18 December 2020.

Where there are credible allegations relating to other gatherings, these may be investigated.

The primary purpose will be to establish swiftly a general understanding of the nature of the gatherings, including attendance, the setting and the purpose, with reference to adherence to the guidance in place at the time.

If required, the investigations will establish whether individual disciplinary action is warranted.

The work will be undertaken by officials in the Cabinet Office at the direction of the Cabinet Secretary, with support from the Government Legal Department.

The team will have access to all relevant records, and be able to speak to members of staff.

As with all internal investigations, if during the course of the work any evidence emerges of behaviour that is potentially a criminal offence, the matter will be referred to the police and the Cabinet Office's work may be paused. Matters relating to adherence to the law are properly for the police to investigate and the Cabinet Office will liaise with them as appropriate.

Any matters relating to the conduct of Ministers should follow the process set out in the Ministerial Code in the normal way.

All Ministers, Special Advisers, and civil servants will be expected to co-operate with the investigations.

Any staff with information relevant to the investigations should provide it to the Cabinet Office investigation team.

Pastoral care and support will be provided to all staff involved.

The findings of the investigations will be made public. Following the long-standing practice of successive administrations, any specific HR action against individuals will remain confidential.