

# Cameron tweets to twits who lost their jobs

LONDON, UK: Getting the latest news on a British government reshuffle once meant loitering for hours in Downing Street waiting for ministers to emerge from the Prime Minister's office and judging their fate by the look on their face.



British Prime Minister announced the changes to his Cabinet via Twitter, directly after the new post was accepted by the incumbent. Image: Wikipedia

But in this age of social media, David Cameron unveiled a major shake-up of his cabinet via his two official Twitter accounts, which between them boast 3.4m followers.

"I'll be reshuffling the Cabinet today. Watch this Twitter feed for the very latest. #Reshuffle," the Premier announced overnight.

When his Conservative party was still in opposition in 2009, Cameron famously explained his reluctance to join Twitter, saying: "The instantness of it, I think, too many twits might make a twat."

But he is now firmly on board and amid the swirling and often contradictory rumours in Westminster, @Number10gov and @David\_Cameron became an authoritative source of information about who was in and who was out.

Government ministries routinely use Twitter and more than 450 of the 650 members of the House of Commons have accounts, with former foreign secretary William Hague one of the most enthusiastic users.

## Cameron now frequent user of Twitter

Hague would often tweet his reaction to breaking news for his 240,000 followers well before an official statement arrived

from the Foreign Office, posing some difficulties for the staff in the press office.

Hague's replacement, former Defence Secretary Philip Hammond, has yet to set up an official account and a spokesman said it was "too early" to say how he would use social media.

True to form, Hague announced his resignation via @WilliamJHague earlier this week just as Cameron tweeted a message of thanks for his four years in the job.

It is not the first time the prime minister has used social media in this way, having unveiled a previous reshuffle in September 2012 through a string of tweets.

Twitter also allowed those who had been promoted to crow about their new job, and those who were passed over to have the final word.

Former Defence Secretary Liam Fox had been widely tipped to return to the cabinet, but as speculation grew about his failure to be promoted, he tweeted a statement pointing out that he had been offered a job, but had turned it down.

Former Climate Change Minister Greg Barker, meanwhile, gave thanks for the online support after he was shown the door.

"As we all know Twitter can be a cruel mistress at times but have been really moved and surprised by so many lovely messages. #ThankYou," he tweeted.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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