

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Cabinet Ministers/Secretaries in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and Singapore are political appointees. In the UK, the Cabinet comprises some 20 Ministers. In the US, a President's Cabinet includes the Vice President and the Heads of 14 executive departments (Cabinet Secretaries). In Singapore, the Cabinet consists of the Prime Minister and 16 other Ministers.
2. In the UK, the US and Singapore, there are generally no specific criteria for a person to be eligible for ministerial posts, except for requirements concerning citizenship and allegiance. In a parliamentary system of government, such as the UK and Singapore, persons who hold ministerial posts are required to possess parliamentary qualification.
3. In the UK, most Cabinet Ministers are career politicians and are drawn from the Shadow Cabinet. In the US, Cabinet Secretaries are drawn from a variety of sources, especially those having close personal ties with the President. In Singapore, Ministers may be handpicked from the private sector by the ruling party to participate in politics.
4. In the US, appointment to a Cabinet office is undertaken only after the 'advice and consent' of the Senate have been obtained, following a detailed pre-checking process. In both the UK and Singapore, ministerial appointment is entirely at the discretion of the Prime Minister based upon the personal and political reputation of a candidate. There is no pre-checking on a candidate's fitness for ministerial office.
5. There is a big difference in ministerial salary levels among the countries covered in this study. Ministerial salaries in Singapore are at the higher end and are pegged with the private sector through a benchmark scheme. Ministerial salaries in both the UK and the US are kept at a more modest level.
6. In the UK, the US and Singapore, ministerial positions are different from civil service posts. Therefore, unlike civil servants, holders of ministerial posts do not have employment contracts. The relationship between the head of government and political appointees is political rather than contractual.
7. As regards the ways to avoid conflicts of interest, there is a fundamental difference among the countries covered in this study owing to the different systems of government adopted. The parliamentary system of government in both the UK and Singapore relies on codes of conduct to regulate Ministers' conflicts of interest. The presidential system of

government in the US relies on statutory regulations.

8. In all three countries, ministerial positions are held by politicians and can be removed for political reasons. Conditions of removal are regulated either by constitutional conventions as in the UK or by legal means as in the US.