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Written by Andy Frain on 11 July 2018



Amidst the flurry of activity during yesterday's reshuffle, it may have gone under the radar that Matt Hancock's ascension to the Department of Health left a vacancy at the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

Hancock's tenure at DCMS was brief, but genuinely memorable. The Matt Hancock app may have gained an element of notoriety, but it was indicative of an enthusiasm for the role that endeared him to many working in the Department and he proved a generally popular Minister (although the less said about the parkour video, the better).

His replacement, Jeremy Wright, couldn't really contrast more to Hancock's boyish enthusiasm. A trained Barrister, Wright joins DCMS from his previous role as Attorney General and his Parliamentary career to date has had a considerable legal edge. For most of his thirteen years, Wright has been concerned with issues surrounding crime, education and the rights of the elderly, and seems an odd fit for the role once described by David Mellor as the "Minister of Fun".

It is notable how rarely Wright has discussed any issues relating to the DCMS brief - during more than 13 years in Parliament, he has only ever actually said the word "digital" twice in the House, and he has shown little interest in media matters. The extent of his contributions on Culture & Sport extend

to admitting a partiality for golf and James Bond films. In fact, it would be harder to find many Ministers who have shown less interest in the topics contained in their brief.

Of course, reticence of discussion of these sectors does not necessarily indicate ignorance – given his legal background it makes sense for him to have focused on those issues. It does, however, make Wright something of a blank slate in his new role and makes his choices in the position difficult to predict.

In truth, it's possible that the best indicators as to how Wright will behave as Minister lie in his Governmental career so far, in which he has stuck firmly to remaining under-the-radar and uncontroversial. Firmly loyal to successive leaderships, Wright has been careful not to tread on many toes during his eight years in Government and it could be speculated that Wright will continue this trend in his new position.

Ongoing issues like the Sky takeover, gambling regulation or restrictions on harmful advertising are all in something of a state of flux this time, however, and Wright will have to get up to speed quickly in order to take decisive action.

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