

# Jeremy Hunt (politician)

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**Jeremy Richard Streynsham Hunt**,<sup>[1]</sup> PC, MP (born 1 November 1966) is a British Conservative Party politician, who is the Secretary of State for Health, and the Member of Parliament for South West Surrey.

**The Right Honourable  
Jeremy Hunt  
MP**



**Secretary of State for Health**

**Incumbent**

**Assumed office**  
4 September 2012

**Prime Minister** David Cameron

**Preceded by** Andrew Lansley

**Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport**

**In office**  
12 May 2010 – 4 September 2012

**Prime Minister** David Cameron

**Preceded by** Ben Bradshaw

**Succeeded by** Maria Miller

**Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**

**In office**  
2 July 2007 – 11 May 2010

**Leader** David Cameron

**Preceded by** Hugo Swire

**Succeeded by** Ben Bradshaw

## Shadow Minister for the Olympics

### In office

2 July 2007 – 11 May 2010

<b>Leader</b>	David Cameron
<b>Preceded by</b>	Position established
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Tessa Jowell

## Shadow Minister for Disabled People

### In office

6 December 2005 – 2 July 2007

<b>Leader</b>	David Cameron
<b>Preceded by</b>	Paul Goodman
<b>Succeeded by</b>	Mark Harper

## Member of Parliament for South West Surrey

### Incumbent

#### Assumed office

5 May 2005

<b>Preceded by</b>	Virginia Bottomley
<b>Majority</b>	16,318 (28.5%)

### Personal details

<b>Born</b>	Jeremy Richard Streynsham Hunt 1 November 1966 Godalming, England
<b>Political party</b>	Conservative
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Lucia Liu (2009–present)
<b>Children</b>	Jack Anna
<b>Alma mater</b>	Magdalen College, Oxford
<b>Website</b>	Party website ( <a href="http://www.conservatives.com/People/Members_of_Parliament/Hunt_Jeremy.aspx">http://www.conservatives.com/People/Members_of_Parliament/Hunt_Jeremy.aspx</a> ) Personal website ( <a href="http://www.jeremyhunt.org">http://www.jeremyhunt.org</a> )

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## Early life and education

Jeremy Hunt was born in Lambeth Hospital, Kennington,<sup>[2]</sup> the elder son of Admiral Sir Nicholas Hunt,<sup>[3]</sup> who was then a Commander in the Royal Navy assigned to work for the Director of Naval Plans inside the recently created Ministry of Defence,<sup>[4]</sup> by his wife Meriel Eve *née* Givan (now Lady Hunt), daughter of Major Henry C. Givan.<sup>[5]</sup> Hunt was raised in Shere, near the constituency that he now represents in Parliament.<sup>[6]</sup>

Hunt was educated at Charterhouse School, where he was Head Boy,<sup>[3]</sup> before attending Magdalen College, Oxford, where he graduated with a First in PPE. He became involved in Conservative politics while at university, where David Cameron and Boris Johnson were contemporaries.<sup>[7]</sup> He was active in the Oxford University Conservative Association (OUCA), and was elected to serve as President in 1987.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Early career

After university Hunt worked for a short period of time as a management consultant, and then decided to pursue life as an English language teacher in Japan. Whilst living in Japan he became a proficient speaker of the Japanese language and enthusiast of modern Japanese and other east Asian cultures.

On his return to Britain he tried his hand at a number of different entrepreneurial business ventures, including a failed attempt to export marmalade to Japan.<sup>[8]</sup> Hunt joined Profile PR, a public relations agency specialising in IT which he co-founded with Mike Elms, a childhood friend. With clients such as BT, Bull Integris, and Zetafax Profile did well during the IT boom of the mid-1990s. Hunt and Elms later sold their interest in Profile to concentrate on directory publishing. Together they founded a company now known as Hotcourses,<sup>[9]</sup> a major client of whose is the British Council. Hotcourses has subsequently provided financial support to Hunt's parliamentary office.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

## Member of Parliament

Hunt was elected at the 2005 general election, after Virginia Bottomley was created a life peeress. He was elected to represent the constituency of South West Surrey with an increased majority of 5,711.

After supporting David Cameron's bid for leadership of the Conservative Party, he was appointed Shadow Minister for Disabled People in December 2005. In David Cameron's reshuffle of 2 July 2007, Hunt joined the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. When the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats formed a coalition following the 2010 general election, Hunt was appointed Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (combining the roles of leading the Department

for Culture, Media and Sport with that of Minister for the Olympics). He was consequently appointed a Privy Councillor on 13 May 2010.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Expenses

In 2009, Hunt was investigated by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards after allowing his political agent to live in his taxpayer funded home in Farnham as a lodger from November 2005 to June 2007.<sup>[13][14]</sup> The commissioner found:

Mr Hunt was in breach of the rules in not reducing his claims on the Additional Costs Allowance in that period to take full account of his agent's living costs. As a result, public funds provided a benefit to the constituency agent... *But I accept that Mr Hunt received no real financial benefit from the arrangement and that the error was caused by his misinterpretation of the rules.*<sup>[14]</sup>

Hunt's offer to repay half the money (£9,558.50) was accepted.<sup>[14]</sup> Hunt also had to repay £1,996 for claiming the expenses of his Farnham home whilst claiming the mortgage of his Hammersmith home.<sup>[14]</sup> The commissioner said:

Mr Hunt has readily accepted that he was in error, and in breach of the rules of the House, in making a claim for utilities and other services on his Farnham home in the period during which it was still his main home. He has repaid the sum claimed, £1,996, in full. It is clear that, as a new Member in May 2005, his office arrangements were at best disorganised.<sup>[14]</sup>

The *Legg Report* showed no other outstanding issues.<sup>[15]</sup> Hunt's expenses were ranked 568 out of 647 in 2008–2009 and 548 out of 645 in 2007–8.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Hillsborough comments

In June 2010, Hunt attracted controversy for suggesting football hooliganism played a part in the death of 96 football fans in the Hillsborough disaster; when in reality lack of police control and the presence of terraces and perimeter fences were established as the causes of the tragedy. He later apologised saying "I know that fan unrest played no part in the terrible events of April 1989 and I apologise to Liverpool fans and the families of those killed and injured in the Hillsborough disaster if my comments caused any offence."<sup>[17]</sup>

## Tax avoidance

In April 2012, immediately following David Cameron's statement that he would not associate himself with anyone who carried out "aggressive tax avoidance", the *Daily Telegraph* disclosed that Hunt had reduced his tax bill by over £100,000 by receiving dividends from Hotcourses in the form of property which was promptly leased back to the company.<sup>[18]</sup> The dividend in specie was paid just before a 10% rise in dividend tax and Hunt was not required to pay stamp duty on the property.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Culture Secretary

In September 2010, *The Observer* reported "raised eyebrows" when Hunt's former parliamentary assistant, Naomi Gummer, had been given a job within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on a fixed-term civil service contract after Hunt had proposed departmental cuts of 35–50 per cent.<sup>[19]</sup> The head of the

Public and Commercial Services Union questioned Hunt's motives saying, "Political independence of the civil service is a fundamental part of our democracy and we would be deeply concerned if this was being put at risk by nepotism and privilege."<sup>[19]</sup> Gummer is the daughter of a Conservative life peer, Lord Chadlington, who was a director of Hotcourses between 2000 and 2004.<sup>[19]</sup>

As Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, Hunt oversaw an expansion of the responsibilities of his Department. Competition and policy issues relating to media and telecommunications became the responsibility of the culture secretary; they were removed from the purview of the Business Secretary, Vince Cable, after Cable was recorded stating that he had "declared war" on Rupert Murdoch.<sup>[20]</sup>

Hunt was consequently given the quasi-judicial power to adjudicate over the News Corporation takeover bid for BSkyB. Hunt chose not to refer to the deal to the Competition Commission, announcing on 3 March 2011 that he intended to accept a series of undertakings given by News Corporation, paving the way for the deal to be approved.<sup>[21]</sup> Following a series of scandals concerning phone hacking, a House of Commons motion was planned that called on News Corporation to abandon the bid. The bid was eventually dropped.<sup>[22]</sup> Hunt was alleged to have had improper contact with News Corp. Emails released to the Leveson Inquiry detailed contacts between Hunt's special advisor Adam Smith and Frédéric Michel,<sup>[23]</sup> News Corp's director of public affairs and therefore a lobbyist for James Murdoch. The revelations led to calls from the Labour opposition and others for Hunt's resignation.<sup>[24]</sup> Smith, Hunt's special advisor, resigned on 25 April<sup>[25]</sup> shortly before Hunt made an emergency parliamentary statement in which he said that Smith's contact with Michel was "clearly not appropriate". Hunt said Lord Justice Leveson should be able to investigate and rule on the accusations and requested the earliest date possible to give evidence to the Inquiry to set out his side of the story.<sup>[26]</sup> As a contribution to the House of Commons debate questioning Hunt's conduct, his PPS, Rob Wilson drew up a list of supportive questions for Tory MPs to ask in the House of Commons in the midst of the BSkyB controversy.<sup>[27]</sup> Hunt appeared before the Leveson inquiry on 31 May 2012, when it emerged that Hunt had himself been in text and private email contact with James Murdoch, congratulating him on the progress of the takeover bid, before he took over responsibility for adjudicating on the bid.<sup>[28][29]</sup>

In June 2012, Labour MP Chris Bryant accused Hunt of lying to Parliament.<sup>[30]</sup> Speaker Bercow refused to require Bryant retract his allegation that Hunt was a "liar" on the basis that the debate was on a "substantive motion on the conduct of a minister [Hunt], the normal rules about parliamentary language frankly don't apply".<sup>[31]</sup>

A Labour motion calling for an enquiry by Sir Alex Allan was defeated by 290 to 252 votes, with the Liberal Democrats absenting themselves as ordered to by Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister of the Coalition and Leader of the Liberal Democrats.<sup>[32]</sup>

As Culture Secretary, Hunt was also responsible for security at the London Olympic Games 2012.<sup>[33]</sup> When it transpired that contractors G4S were not adequately prepared for the Games, Hunt stated he had been forced to "think again" about the default use of private contractors.<sup>[34]</sup> According to Shadow Health Secretary, Andy Burnham, Hunt also reportedly attempted to have scenes celebrating the National Health Service removed from the Olympics opening ceremony.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Health Secretary

Hunt was appointed Health Secretary in a cabinet reshuffle on 4 September 2012, succeeding Andrew Lansley.<sup>[36]</sup> He described the appointment as "huge task and the biggest privilege of my life".

The chair of the British Medical Association, Dr Mark Porter, said "The appointment of a new Health Secretary provides a fresh opportunity for doctors and government to work together to improve patient care and deal with the many challenges facing the NHS."<sup>[37]</sup> The deputy chairman of the same association, Dr Kailash Chand, said "Jeremy Hunt is new Health Secretary – disaster in the NHS carries on. I fear a more toxic right winger to follow the privatisation agenda."<sup>[38]</sup>

The *Daily Telegraph* science correspondent Tom Chivers expressed concern that Hunt is known to support homeopathy.<sup>[39]</sup>

In an interview with *The Times* in October 2012, Hunt said that he was in favour of reducing the abortion limit from 24 weeks to 12 weeks.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Personal life

Hunt's wife, Lucia Liu, comes from Xi'an in China. They married in Xi'an in July 2009, and have a son, Jack, born in 2010, and a daughter, Anna, born in 2012.<sup>[41][42][43]</sup>

Hunt enjoys dancing the Zouk-Lambada.<sup>[44][45]</sup>

## See also

- United Kingdom coalition government (2010–present)

## References

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## External links

- Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP (<http://www.jeremyhunt.org/>) *official constituency website*
  - Jeremy Hunt's YouTube Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/mpjeremyHunt>)
- Secretary of State (<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/ministers/jeremyhunt/>) at Department of Health
- Profile (<http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/jeremy-hunt/35446>) at Parliament of the United Kingdom
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- Record in Parliament ([http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/jeremy\\_hunt](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/jeremy_hunt)) at TheyWorkForYou.com
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- Profile (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/representatives/profiles/35446.stm>) at BBC News Democracy Live
- Articles authored (<http://journalisted.com/jeremy-hunt>) at *Journalisted*
- Appearances (<http://www.c-spanvideo.org/jeremyhunt>) on C-SPAN
- Jeremy Hunt (politician) (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3194544/>) at the Internet Movie Database
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- Talking about the 2005 election ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/ondemand/rams/wup17123\\_\\_2005.ram](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/ondemand/rams/wup17123__2005.ram)) , BBC World Service

<b>Parliament of the United Kingdom</b>		
Preceded by <b>Virginia Bottomley</b>	<b>Member of Parliament for South West Surrey</b> 2005–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Political offices</b>		
Preceded by <b>Ben Bradshaw</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport</i>	<b>Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport</b> 2010–2012	Succeeded by <b>Maria Miller</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport</i>
Preceded by <b>Tessa Jowell</b> <i>as Minister of State for the Olympics</i>		
Preceded by <b>Andrew Lansley</b>	<b>Secretary of State for Health</b> 2012–present	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Order of precedence in England and Wales</b>		
Preceded by <b>Eric Pickles</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government</i>	<b>Gentlemen</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Health</i>	Succeeded by <b>Owen Paterson</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</i>
<b>Order of precedence in Northern Ireland</b>		
Preceded by <b>Eric Pickles</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government</i>	<b>Gentlemen</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Health</i>	Succeeded by <b>Owen Paterson</b> <i>as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</i>

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