

UK government gives twice-fired politician top honour

7th March, 2022



Picture: UK Cabinet Office

The U.K. government has awarded one of its highest honours to a former minister who was fired twice by successive Prime Ministers. Gavin Williamson, 45, will receive a knighthood for services to public life. He will become "Sir" Gavin Williamson. The award has

angered many politicians in Britain due to Mr Williamsons' somewhat checkered career. He was fired as Defence Secretary by then Prime Minister Theresa May in 2019 over a national security leak over discussions about the UK's national security and Chinese telecoms company Huawei. Ms May said she had, "lost confidence in his ability to serve". Current PM Boris Johnson fired him from being Education Secretary in September 2021 following a series of gaffes.

Knighthoods are awarded to Britons who have excelled in their field or in areas of public life. Recipients have usually spent decades as incredible leaders or winners. Williamson only became a politician in 2010. Other politicians have said he is undeserving of the honour. One said the only award he should get was "worst Education Secretary in history". Another said his record in government was "disgraceful". She said: "Williamson left children to go hungry, created two years of complete chaos over exams, and failed to get laptops out to kids struggling to learn during lockdowns." Some newspapers said the award is in return for Williamson keeping quiet about allegations surrounding Boris Johnson.

Sources: [mirror.co.uk](https://www.mirror.co.uk) / [sky.com](https://www.sky.com) / [reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com)

Writing

Honours should only decided on by the public, not by governments. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

government / honour / service / public life / politicians / defence / discussions / gaffes / excelled / field / decade / politician / record / disgraceful / learn / lockdowns / quit

True / False

- 1) A U.K. politician received Britain's highest award. T / F
- 2) The politician received the award for his service to private life. T / F
- 3) The politician was first fired when he was the UK Defence Secretary. T / F
- 4) The politician was also fired from his position as Education Secretary. T / F
- 5) The UK gives knighthoods to people from all across the world. T / F
- 6) Gavin Williamson became a politician in the year 2000. T / F
- 7) Another politician said Mr Williamson's record was a disgrace. T / F
- 8) A politician said Mr Williamson gave a laptop to every struggling child. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. awarded | a. shone |
| 2. fired | b. infuriated |
| 3. angered | c. battling |
| 4. leak | d. shameful |
| 5. gaffes | e. sacked |
| 6. excelled | f. claims |
| 7. disgraceful | g. revelation |
| 8. chaos | h. given |
| 9. struggling | i. mayhem |
| 10. allegations | j. errors |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of politicians?
- b) What do you think of your politician?
- c) Would you be a good politician?
- d) Who should get top honours?
- e) What do you know about Britain's knighthoods?
- f) Should someone with a 'checkered career' get a top honour?
- g) Have you ever made any gaffes?
- h) What gaffes have politicians in your country made?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. awarded one of its | a. about allegations |
| 2. The award has | b. in his ability to serve |
| 3. a national security | c. in areas of public life |
| 4. she had lost confidence | d. "disgraceful" |
| 5. following a series of | e. leak |
| 6. excelled in their field or | f. angered many politicians |
| 7. his record in government was | g. during lockdowns |
| 8. two years of complete | h. gaffes |
| 9. kids struggling to learn | i. highest honours |
| 10. keeping quiet | j. chaos |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What would you do if you were a politician?
- What should we honour people for?
- Who would you give an honour to?
- What should you be honoured for?
- Have you ever excelled in anything?
- Should the general public decide who gets national honours?
- What questions would you like to ask Britain's leader?

Spelling

- fired twice by cceuisssve Prime Ministers
- receive a doiontkhhg for services to public life
- The award has dnaerg many politicians
- due to Mr Willamsons' somewhat ercdkeehc career
- lost cofcdnenie in his ability to serve
- following a series of asffge
- Britons who have cxdleeel in their field
- csetepinir have usually spent decades
- he is nu-dvnesirge of the honour
- his record in government was dceagiurfls
- complete ochsa
- ilseaanlotg surrounding Boris Johnson

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. b	4. g	5. j
6. a	7. d	8. i	9. c	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Politician

You think a politician is most deserving of an honour. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not as deserving. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): environmentalist, teacher or soldier.

Role B – Environmentalist

You think an environmentalist is most deserving of an honour. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not as deserving. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): politician, teacher or soldier.

Role C – Teacher

You think a teacher is most deserving of an honour. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not as deserving. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): environmentalist, politician or soldier.

Role D – Soldier

You think a soldier is most deserving of an honour. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not as deserving. Also, tell the others which is the least deserving of these (and why): environmentalist, teacher or politician.

Speaking – Honour

Rank these with your partner. Put the person most deserving of an honour at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| • Politician | • Environmentalist |
| • Soldier | • Aid volunteer |
| • Scientist | • Mother |
| • Nurse | • Teacher |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.