

Cameron's 'sinister' mind tests for the Cabinet in waiting



ADVICE: Kris Murrin, a behaviour expert who appears on TV, has been consulted

By Simon Walters
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DAVID CAMERON faces a revolt over secret plans to force Tory MPs to have psychometric testing to prove they are fit to be Ministers if he wins the next General Election.

Party chiefs have had talks with TV psychologist Kris Murrin on how to weed out those with psychological or other flaws.

Under a separate proposal, MPs' secretaries – and even former secretaries – would be asked about their bosses' private conduct, such as how they react under pressure.

However, the initiative has provoked a backlash from some Conservatives, who claim it had 'sinister undertones'.

One MP claimed the real motive was to get rid of MPs who do not match up to image-conscious Mr Cameron's personal and political style. The tests are among ideas put forward by Tory election chief Francis Maude, who is in charge of Mr Cameron's 'implementation unit', set up to prepare the party for taking power.

Australian-born behavioural expert Mrs Murrin, who has a masters degree in psychology from Cambridge University, was among those present at a meeting of the implementation unit at the Tories' Millbank HQ in London on September 15.

Mrs Murrin advises firms on how to get more out of staff. She also presented the BBC TV programme *Honey We're Killing The Kids*, which investigated Britain's epidemic of child obesity. She showed parents what their over-indulged children would look like in middle age if they did not pursue a healthier lifestyle.

Mrs Murrin shares Mr Cameron's concern about green issues and has expressed similar sentiments to his crusade to tackle what he has called Britain's 'broken society'. The mother of three also hosted the Channel 4 show *The Woman Who Stops Traffic*, in which she tried to persuade Middle England

to abandon its cars and adopt a more environmentally friendly lifestyle.

A well placed source said: 'At the meeting, Kris explained how she could help the party make sure it picked the right people for senior jobs in government. The meeting discussed ways of measuring MPs' skills, and how to select the right people for the right Whitehall departments. It also examined the question of interviewing MPs' staff past and present to obtain more information about them.'

'The idea is to find out before we get into government which Shadow Ministers are capable of controlling a

major department and a big budget – and which ones are not.'

But the idea has not gone down well with some Tory MPs. One said: 'We have said we oppose the spread of the Big Brother state under New Labour – but here we are using the same methods.'

'We should be judged by what we do as politicians, not whether or not we pass some kind of mumbo-jumbo psychobabble experiment. This sounds like an exercise designed to produce more frontbenchers who look and sound like David Cameron.'

'What our staff think of us is irrelevant. The idea that a disgruntled ex-employee could have a say in whether someone becomes a Minister is preposterous. We deserve better than to be treated

Comment: Page 27

'We shouldn't be judged using psychobabble'



Tory champagne is