



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

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The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for Cabinet Office

9 July 2021

*Dear Michael,*

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) to bring to your attention a breach of the Government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules). This is outlined in the correspondence sent to Dominic Cummings, copied below.

The Rules are set by the Government, with the policy owned by the Cabinet Office. The Committee is independent, with a remit to consider applications received under those Rules, consider the risks and advise on the conditions that should apply.

I understand that Mr Cummings has made an application via the Cabinet Office to the Committee for consideration. However, in the meantime it appears that Mr Cummings is offering various services for payment via a blog hosted on Substack, the blog for which he is also receiving subscription payments. Mr Cummings has failed to seek the Committee's advice on this commercial undertaking, nor has the Committee received the courtesy of a reply to our letter requesting an explanation. Failure to seek and await advice before taking up work is a breach of the government's Rules.

The Committee will not advise retrospectively in these circumstances. It is our policy to act transparently, including making public any failure to follow the Rules that it is made aware of. It is now a matter for the government to decide what appropriate action to take.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Yours ever  
Sir Pickles

Copied to: Darren Tierney, Director of Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office and Chloe Smith MP, Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution.



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Dominic Cummings  
By email

24 June 2021

Dear Mr Cummings

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee). It was reported in a recent press article<sup>1</sup> that you are offering various services for payment via a blog hosted on Substack, the blog for which you are also receiving subscription payments.

Whilst we are aware of an application you have made to the Cabinet Office for advice in relation to consultancy services, it is not clear if this is the same service you are promoting on this blog, or if this is a separate set of services. The Committee does not appear to have received or advised you on an application in relation to the specifics of the business described on your blog here: <https://dominiccumings.substack.com/p/systems-politics-systems-management>.

The government's Business Appointment Rules exist to protect the integrity of government; and make it clear that new appointments/employment should not be taken up or announced before receiving advice. It appears you may be in breach of these Rules. I am writing for clarification so the Committee can understand the circumstances behind your apparent failure to seek and await for advice before promoting and receiving payment for your services; and to provide you with an opportunity to tell us about any steps you have taken to ensure the probity in this work, given your previous role as Chief of Staff at No.10.

In line with the Committee's policy of transparency, we will be publishing correspondence on this matter. If you wish your explanation to be published alongside this, please reply to this letter before Monday 5 July 2021. Any failure to respond will be included in our publication.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Dominic Cummings

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/substack-offers-profitable-platform-for-cummings-sm6kw6tvr>