



Lord True CBE  
Minister of State  
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

Rt Hon Lord Pickles  
Chair, Advisory Committee on Business  
Appointments  
Room G/8  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Our reference: MC2021/24008

23 December 2021

Dear Lord Pickles,

Thank you for your letter of 22 November to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, relating to Esther McVey's employment as a presenter on GB News. I have been asked to reply as the Minister with policy responsibility for the Business Appointment Rules.

The Cabinet Office agrees with the Committee's assessment that Ms McVey has not adhered to the Business Appointment Rules by failing to seek the Committee's advice in advance of her engagement as a GB News programme presenter.

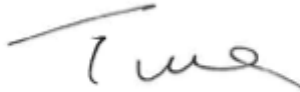
From the correspondence you enclosed in your letter, we understand that Ms McVey was initially a contributor to the GB News programme, and agree that in this capacity would not be required to seek the Committee's advice. However, when the role evolved into a regular engagement, we agree that Ms McVey should have sought ACoBA's advice before entering into that engagement. It is vital that all individuals who have held Ministerial positions abide by the requirement to seek advice about any appointments or employment they wish to take up within two years of leaving office.

I note Ms McVey's confirmation that she does not draw upon any privileged information from her time as a Minister in this new role, as well as the Committee's assessment that the risks surrounding media appointments are limited, and typically subject to the conditions that former Ministers are already required to abide by following their departure from office. Due to the highly visible nature of the role, we agree with the Committee's advice that further action would be disproportionate in this case. I have also taken into account the importance of journalism and of free speech; the business appointment process is not intended to restrict unnecessarily how former Ministers may continue to contribute to public debate.

As you are aware, the Cabinet Office is working with your Committee to improve the operation and efficacy of the Business Appointment Rules. This will include assessing the range of sanctions and also how business appointment conditions should be proportionate to risk.

I would like to thank the Committee for your ongoing work on these matters.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'True', with a long horizontal stroke above the first few letters.

**Lord True CBE**