



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

July 2021

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for former ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up an appointment as an Advisory Council Member for Transparency International UK (TI-UK). The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during time in office, alongside the information and influence a former minister may offer TI-UK.
3. The Rules set out that Crown servants must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former Crown servants are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's consideration of the risks presented

4. When considering this application, the Committee took into account this role as an Advisory Council Member is unpaid. Generally, the Committee's experience is that the risks related to unpaid roles are limited. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government by considering the real and perceived risks associated with former ministers using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent; and to mitigate the risks that individuals may make decisions or take action in office to in expectation of rewards, on leaving government. These risks are significantly limited in unpaid cases due to the lack of financial gain to the individual.
5. The Committee noted that although there was a previous contractual relationship between the FCDO and TI-UK, you had no involvement in this.

6. The Committee also acknowledged the inherent risks associated with your access to relevant privileged information, knowledge, and contacts. It noted the FCDO's comments on your portfolio in office. However, the Committee agreed with the FCDO that the risks are limited given the time that has passed since you left office, and that you no longer hold any relevant sensitive information as a result.

The Committee's advice

7. As above the Committee recognised that the risks in this unpaid appointment are limited. The Committee did not consider this appointment to raise any particular proprietary concerns under the government's Business Appointment Rules. The standard conditions below, preventing you from drawing on your privileged information and using your contacts to the unfair advantage of their new employer, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case.
8. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises that this appointment with **Transparency International UK** be subject to the following conditions:
 - you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in ministerial office;
 - for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government on behalf of the Transparency International UK (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Transparency International UK (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
 - for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with Transparency International UK (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) that involves providing advice on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK government.
9. The Committee also notes that in addition to the conditions imposed on this appointment, there are separate rules in place with regard to your role as a member of the House of Lords.
10. By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise.

11. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/minister “should not engage in communication with government (ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.” This Rule is separate and not a replacement for the Rules in the House.
12. I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up this role, or if it is announced that you will do so. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Rules and the Ministerial Code.
13. Please also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.
14. Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee’s website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Baroness Sugg CBE

Annex - Material information

The role

1. TI-UK’s website states it “*is the UK’s leading independent anti-corruption organisation. For more than 25 years [it has] worked to expose and prevent corruption so that no one in the UK and where the UK has influence has to suffer its consequences [...] [Its] ground-breaking research and work with governments, business and civil society has exposed serious governance issues in the UK and where the UK has contributed to corruption abroad*”.
2. You stated that the Advisory Council advises the Board of TI-UK on relevant issues, strategy, corporate plans and publications.

Dealings in office

3. You stated that you believe the FCDO has provided TI-UK funding in the past, however you are not aware of the details.

Department Assessment

4. The FCDO confirmed the details you provided, stating they have no concerns with the appointment and recommended that the standard restrictions be attached.
5. The FCDO informed the Committee that on 19th August 2020 you and Duncan Hames, the Director of Policy at Transparency International UK, attended a roundtable to discuss the merging of the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The department confirmed this is the only meeting that yourself and a representative of TI-UK both attended.
6. The FCDO stated that your portfolio included responsibility for civil society as a whole, but it is not aware of any decisions you made that would have affected TI-UK. The department confirmed that you regularly met with other civil society organisations, but does not consider them competitors of TI-UK. The FCDO also confirmed that you did not make any funding, contractual or commercial decisions that would have affected TI-UK. The department stated that you left office 8 months ago and as such confirmed you no longer hold any relevant or commercially sensitive information pertaining to TI-UK.
7. The FCDO stated that they provided TI-UK funding from 2017 to March 2021. TI-UK received approximately £1.3 million during this period under an Accountable Grant. TI-UK monitored and produced the final iteration of the Global Anti-Corruption Pledge Tracker which monitors the progress of the commitments made by governments at the 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit.
8. The FCDO stated that any agreements between themselves and TI-UK have now ended. When funding ceased, TI-UK remained a stakeholder of FCDO, with both organisations collaborating to work on policies relating to corruption. While there was a contractual relationship between the FCDO and TI-UK, and it remains a stakeholder in the department, it does not believe that this agreement could be considered to offer an unfair insight or advantage to TI-UK. The FCDO stated that you did not have contact with TI-UK beyond the aforementioned roundtable.