



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

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: [acoba@acoba.gov.uk](mailto:acoba@acoba.gov.uk)

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

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**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: The Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, former Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Paid appointment with the Daily Mail.**

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 a columnist with the Daily Mail to write a weekly column. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex below.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during your time in office, alongside the information and influence you may offer the Daily Mail. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment - it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules.
4. The Ministerial Code sets out that ministers must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former ministers of the Crown 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

5. The Committee<sup>1</sup> noted that as Secretary of State you brief the media and would have been involved in decisions that impacted the media, including media outlets such as the Daily Mail. DCMS confirmed any such decisions would have impacted the sector rather than being specific to this organisation. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk you could be seen to have been offered this role as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office, was low.
6. As a former Secretary of State for DCMS there are inherent risks associated with your privileged access to information and contacts which may be seen to be of general use to any media company. The Committee noted these risks would be more significant if you were advising the business generally but given the transparent nature of this role the risks associated with your access to information is limited.

### The Committee's advice

7. The Committee agreed with DCMS that as the former Secretary of State with DCMS with responsibility for the media sector, there would be significant risks associated with your involvement in the commercial business operations of a media outlet. The Committee did not consider joining the Daily Mail as a columnist raises any particular concerns under the government's Rules, provided it is subject to the conditions below. The advice below is explicit that the role is limited as to that as you have described it.
8. The Committee would remind you it is your responsibility to manage the propriety of the specific pieces of work undertaken with the Daily Mail. In particular as a former Secretary of State, you must be careful not to offer any unfair insight as a result of your access to information and potential influence in government - which the conditions below seek to mitigate.
9. The government's Rules state that as a former Cabinet Minister, you are subject to a three month waiting period as standard. The Committee notes that this waiting period has now elapsed.
10. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with the **Daily Mail** 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 or its arm's length bodies on behalf of the Daily Mail (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doverty; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Jonathan Baume; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty and Richard Thomas. Sarah de Gay was unavailable.

in the government and/or ministerial office to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage the Daily Mail (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);

- for two years from your last day in ministerial Office your role with the Daily Mail should be limited to the position of columnist; and
  - for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with the Daily Mail (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 or its arm's length bodies.
11. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your previous role in government only; they are separate to rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists or the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It is your personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations you may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.
  12. 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 Ministerial Code or otherwise.
  13. 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
  14. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that you will do so. 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.
  15. Once the appointment(s) 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

## **Annex - Material information**

### The role

1. The Daily Mail is a British daily tabloid newspaper and news website published in London.
2. You informed the Committee that you have been asked to write a weekly column for The Daily Mail. You said you would write a weekly column about life in general which will include anything from '*...politics, the Royal family, the menopause to the price of fish*'.
3. You said your role will not involve contact with government.

### Dealings in office

4. You said that you met with the Daily Mail and other media outlets during your time in office. You also confirmed you made decisions and were involved in this general policy area.

### Department Assessment

5. DCMS confirmed:
  - a. you did make decisions relevant to the media sector but none specifically impacting the Daily Mail - rather these would have been sector wide; and.
  - b. you met with the Daily Mail and other media outlet regarding media briefings but had no contact that could be perceived as a reward for this role.
6. DCMS noted you would have access to sensitive information but the limitation to your role mitigate this risk. It said you have not been offered a role responsible for any form of business strategy or decision making. This role is specifically limited to providing journalistic content for the Editorial. As long as you are not in any way involved in editorial/commercial decision making, nor advising colleagues on matters relating to your ministerial portfolio, the department sees no conflict.
7. The department recommended the standard conditions.