

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Minutes of Committee meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2016

Present

Baroness Browning (Chair)
Mark Addison
Sir Alex Allan
Baroness Liddell
John Wood

Secretariat
Ekpe Attah
Cat Marshall
Maggie O'Boyle
Nicola Richardson

Chair's Update

1. The Chair welcomed Cat Marshall, new head of the ACOBA team and noted the recent appointment of the new Chief Executive of the Civil Service Commission, Peter Lawrence, who would be in post from Mid November.
2. As part of her ongoing programme of meetings with Permanent Secretaries to raise awareness of the Business Appointment Rules, the Chair had recently met Leslie Evans (Scottish Government) and Jon Thompson (HMRC). Both were very positive meetings and, in particular, Mr Thompson confirmed a number of governance improvements. Given his experience, both at HMRC and previously at MoD, it was agreed that he should be invited to speak at the Committee's next away day.
3. The Chair noted that she would be giving oral evidence at PACAC on 25 October 2016, on its enquiry into the role of ACOBA. She also confirmed that ACOBA's written evidence, which focused on taking an evidence based approach to any recommendations and also recommended that a NED within departments should be given responsibility for business appointments, had been submitted to PACAC for consideration in advance.

Minutes of the last meeting

4. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 11 May 2016, were approved.

MoD

5. The Committee considered information provided by the MoD Business Appointments Panel about the application of waiting periods from military

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personnel's last day in post. The Committee noted they could and would take into account what applicants from the MoD were doing in the time which may have lapsed between their last day in post and their last day in Crown service when considering the application of any waiting period that may be imposed. The Committee noted it was already sensitive to the particular circumstances of individual applicants and needed to continue to take a fair and consistent approach to dealing with the applications that come before it (whether from the Armed Services or other Crown servants).

Casework approach

6. The Committee considered and agreed a proposal from the Secretariat regarding the way in which information was presented to it to allow it to reach a decision on individual applications.

Data on applications as at half year 2016/17

7. The Committee noted the update provided by the secretariat on applications dealt with in the first half of 2016/17.

Communications

8. The Press Officer, Maggie O'Boyle, updated the Committee on recent press coverage.

Freedom of Information

9. The secretariat provided an update on FOI. This included one complaint with the ICO, which was awaiting a decision notice, and an appeal against an ICO decision in favour of ACOBA which was awaiting a Tribunal decision.

Any Other Business

10. The next Committee meeting would take place on Wednesday 7 December.

Committee Secretariat
November 2016