



## OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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### **BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Natalie Ceeney**

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Natalie Ceeney, the former Chief Executive of HM Courts and Tribunals Service, in relation to an appointment with Innovate Finance (Innovate). Her last day of Crown service was 31 May 2016.

The Committee took into consideration that this is a paid, part-time role as Chairman. The role would be to champion the development of FinTech (financial technology innovation) within the UK. Ms Ceeney told the Committee the UK Government was instrumental in establishing Innovate to lead research and policy in this space, and to support the Government in considering ways to help the UK to become more innovative in Financial Services. The Committee noted Government's role in the initial setting up of Innovate and the support received by HM Treasury when it was launched in 2014.

Ms Ceeney told the Committee her role would involve:

- Conversations with financial services businesses to understand what they need from the UK to develop and innovate.
- Being a source of advice to the UK Government and regulators on FinTech issues.
- Working closely with other key stakeholders (such as the City of London and the Financial Conduct Authority) to create the right environment for growth.

The Committee took into account that Ms Ceeney had no contact or official dealings with Innovate while she was in post at HM Courts and Tribunals Service; that Innovate has no relationship with her former department -, the Ministry of Justice; and it has been almost 10 months since her last day in post.

As part of their consideration the Committee noted that whilst Ms Ceeney's role would involve contact with Government in relation to the Fin-Tech sector, it would not involve contact with her former department or on matters specific to her time in post there. The Committee also took into account that the Ministry of Justice had no concerns about role Ms Ceeney is seeking to take up.

The Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, this appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- that she should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to her from her time in Crown service; and
- for two years from her last day in service, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on any matter with which she were directly involved while in Government. This is not intended to prevent her from reporting to Government on the activities of Innovate Finance, or in relation to the Fin-Tech sector. However, you should not make use of, directly or indirectly, your contacts in Government and/or Crown service to influence policy or secure funding on behalf of Innovate Finance.

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.

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."*

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Ms Ceeney takes up this position, or if it is announced that she will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether she had complied with the Rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Ms Ceeney informs us if she proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of her role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for her to make a fresh application.

Once these appointments have been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Yours sincerely

Catriona Marshall  
Committee Secretariat