



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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Mr George Freeman MP
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

24 December 2020

You have informed ACOBA that you took an unpaid role working with Aerosol Shield Ltd via the Government, to help with the call for help from industry as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

I understand from the correspondence that you considered seeking advice from ACOBA but deemed it would only be necessary if this was an *'ongoing role'*. Having accepted an ongoing role, you later decided not to formally take it up after carrying out some short-term, paid work for Aerosol Shield Ltd. You described this as providing commercial advice on raising funding for the company's research and development pipeline, its longer term business plan and strategy.

The Government's Business Appointment Rules apply by virtue of the Ministerial Code, which states (in paragraph 7.25) that Ministers must *'seek advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) about any appointments or employment [my emphasis] they wish to take up within two years of leaving office. Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before the Committee has been able to provide its advice.'*

You were required to seek and await ACOBA's advice in advance of accepting a role or taking on work. Failure to seek and await advice in this case was a breach of the Government's Rules and the requirement set out in the Ministerial Code.

In line with our policy of transparency, I will be publishing our correspondence on this matter in due course.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Mr George Freeman MP