

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about taking up an unpaid, part-time appointment with the Social Market Foundation (SMF), having left your ministerial position in May 2015. With the SMF you would lead a commission on tackling inequality in education. The proposed start date for the appointment is the 2nd November 2015 and you expect there would be a time commitment of around one hour per week.

Taking into account all of the circumstances, including your statement that the role would not require you to lobby Government, and having sought the opinion of your former department, which did not have any concerns regarding the propriety of this appointment, the Committee sees no reason why you should not take up the appointment, subject to the following conditions:

- You should not draw on [disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the organisations or persons to which this advice refers] any privileged information available to you in your time as a Minister;
- 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 Social Market Foundation, or any of its parent companies, subsidiaries, or clients.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a minister 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.

Also, It might be helpful if I add that the Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that former Ministers "should not engage in communication with Government – including Ministers, special advisers and officials – with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted".

Members:

Mark Addison, Sir Alex Allan KCB, Baroness Browning (Chair), Lord German OBE, Mary Jo Jacobi, Terence Jagger, Rt Hon Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke, John Wood

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I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up the appointment, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. 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. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code. Similarly, I should be grateful if you would inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change your role with the SMF as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

Once the appointment has 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.

Baroness Browning

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP

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