

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/8 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

January 2016

You asked for the Committee's advice about appointments with: London School of Economics (LSE), Richmond Adult Community College (RACC), DBA Speakers and Health-Connected.

In relation to these applications the Committee has noted that you had no official dealings with DBA Speakers and Health-Connected in your ministerial role, and that any contact with LSE and RACC was through your broad oversight of higher and further education and, in the case of RACC, links to your former constituency as an MP. They further noted that those two appointments were unpaid. The Committee also took into account the views of your former department, which raised no concerns about any of these roles.

Taking into account all of the circumstances, the Committee sees no reason why you should not take up these appointments, 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 as a Minister; and
- For two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of LSE, Health-Connected, DBA Speakers or Richmond Adult Community College, or any of their partners, subsidiaries or clients.

Finally, I would like to note the Committee's concern that your appointment with Richmond Adult Community College was announced before we had the opportunity to provide our advice on it. Although this is an unpaid appointment involving voluntary community activity, the Business Appointment Rules are clear that former Ministers must seek the Committee's advice on all new appointments taken up within two years of leaving office.

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.

Members:

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

From the Chair

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 [including applications for awards or grants] in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted".

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up any of these appointments, 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 these roles as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

Once the 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.

The Baroness Browning

Rt Hon Sir Vince Cable

Members:

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