



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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Rt Hon David Willetts MP
House of Commons
London
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30 March 2015

Business Appointment Applications

You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting the three following appointments:

- Board Member of the Biotech Industry Association (BIA);
- Executive Chairman of the Resolution Foundation;
- Chair of the British Science Association (BSA)

When considering your applications, the Committee took into account that you had official dealings with BSA and BIA and these took place as part of your responsibilities as Minister for Science. The Committee have noted that you previously sat on the Resolution Foundation's advisory board but you did not have any official dealings with them in your capacity as BIS Minister.

The Committee took into account that you are aware of an on-going non-contractual relationship between BIA and BIS on life sciences policy issues. The Committee further notes that BIA is not in receipt of Government funding, however some of their member organisations are. In addition, the Committee noted that there is an on-going relationship between BSA and BIS in the form of Government funding. BSA has a total budget of approximately £3m and BIS provides almost half of this in various forms.

The Committee took into account that BIA lobbies Government, but you will not be taking part in this. The Committee also noted that you have made it clear to BSA that you will not be lobbying Government on their behalf.

In addition, the Committee has noted that you did not have any official dealings with any competitors of your prospective employers. They Committee has also taken into account the views of your former department.

Taking into account all the circumstances, the Committee is content to approve the appointments subject to the following conditions:

- that you should not draw on 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 your new employers, their parent companies or clients.

It might be helpful if I add that lobbying is defined in the Business Appointment Rules in the following way: “Lobbying in this context means that the former Minister 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”.

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up the 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 that 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 BIA, the Resolution Foundation or BSA, as depending on the circumstances, it might 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.

Baroness Browning