

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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February 2016

You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting a part time appointment as a Board Member of Think Ahead, a programme set up to attract and develop mental health social workers.

The Committee noted that this is an unpaid appointment and that nine months have passed since you left ministerial office.

In considering your application the Committee took into account that you had initiated Think Ahead while you were a Minister in the Department for Health and secured the funding for it. It noted your view that Think Ahead represents a really important opportunity to get the brightest graduates into mental health social work and your aspiration to help it succeed.

The Committee sought the opinion of your former department, which did not have any concerns regarding the propriety of this appointment.

Taking into account the specific facts in this case, the Committee sees no reason why you should not take up the appointment, subject to the following conditions:

- That you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the organisation 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 Think Ahead except that in this case the Committee accepts that this would not prevent contact with Government pursuant to your role with Think Ahead but would prevent your

involvement in any competitive tendering or bidding processes while carrying out the role.

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 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 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 Think Ahead, as depending on the circumstances, it might 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 applications, 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 Norman Lamb MP