



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://acoba.independent.gov.uk>

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You asked for the Committee's advice about taking up an appointment with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), having left Government in October 2013.

When considering your application, the Committee took into account the fact that you have had an offer of part-time (20+ days per year) paid employment, having applied for an advertised post. You have been asked to join as a member of the Board of the SRA as a lay (and non-executive) member. You will sit on the board which determines the strategic direction of the SRA and take on any specific areas of interest which may be appropriate once he is familiar with the work of the authority. You stated that you would not be engaged in lobbying government, but it is possible that discussions may take place from time to time between the SRA board and the Ministry of Justice on regulatory and other matters relating to legal services.

The Committee noted that you stated that while in office you did not have any official dealings with your prospective employer or its parent company and that you are not aware of any relationship, either contractual or non-contractual between your prospective employer and your former department. You further stated that you did not have any official dealings with competitors of your prospective employer or its parent company.

The Committee also considered the views of your former Department and the Prime Minister's office.

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

- you should not draw on privileged information available to you from your time in Government;

- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying UK Government on behalf of your new employer, its parent company or its 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 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 roles with the SRA 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

David Heath CBE MP