



## OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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### **BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Natalie Ceeney**

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Natalie Ceeney, the former Chief Executive of HM Courts and Tribunals Service, in relation to an appointment with Countrywide PLC. Her last day of Crown service was 31 May 2016.

Countrywide PLC is an estate agents and property services company. The Committee took into consideration that this is a paid, part-time role as Non Executive Director. Ms Ceeney told the Committee the role would cover the responsibilities of a Board Director of a listed company, with a particular focus on supporting the company through major technological transformation and change.

The Committee took into account that this role is unrelated to Ms Ceeney's time in Crown service; Ms Ceeney confirmed she had no contact or official dealings with Countrywide PLC whilst in office; and the role would not require contact with her former department or the wider UK Government. It also took into account that the Ministry of Justice had no concerns about Ms Ceeney taking up this role.

The Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, this appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- that she should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to her from her time in Crown service; and
- for two years from her last day in service, she should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of Countrywide PLC.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant 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.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "*should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in*

*relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office."*

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Ms Ceeney takes up this position, or if it is announced that she will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). 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, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether she had complied with the Rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Ms Ceeney informs us if she proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of her role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for her to make a fresh application.

Once these 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.

Yours sincerely

Alex Morrow  
Committee Secretariat