



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about a new appointment as Chair of the Council of Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).

The Committee's remit

As you will be aware, it is the Committee's role to advise on any conditions that should apply to appointments or employment under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules), which apply to former Ministers for two years after they leave office.

The Rules seek to counter suspicion that:

- a) the decisions and statements of a serving Minister might be influenced by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular firm or organisation; or
- b) an employer could make improper use of official information to which a former Minister has had access; or
- c) there may be cause for concern about the appointment in some other particular respect.

When the Committee considers applications it must have in mind that Government has judged that it is in the public interest that former Ministers with experience in Government should be able to move into business or into other areas of public life, and to be able to start a new career or resume a former one. It is equally important that when a former Minister takes up a particular appointment or employment, there should be no cause for any suspicion of impropriety.

Appointment details

In November 2017 the Committee advised you in relation to an appointment as Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Chatham House.

You have informed the Committee that you have now been asked to become Chair of the Council of Chatham House. As this is a change in role the Committee needs to consider whether any propriety issues arise and provide further advice.

You explained that the role will involve providing strategic leadership and guidance and acting as a leading ambassador for Chatham House, representing it with the institute's principal stakeholders, including its members, its regulators, the British and other governments, and major donors. The role will be unpaid.

The view of HM Treasury is that the changed role does not influence the department's previous advice; therefore HMT does not have any concerns over your new position.

The Committee's consideration

The Committee's consideration of your appointment as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow is included in its letter of November 2017. It considered that, as your role as Chair will be unpaid and there is no direct connection to your time in office, there is no reason why it would be perceived as a reward for actions or decisions taken in office.

The Committee noted that one aspect of your role as Chair will be to act as a visible and leading ambassador for Chatham House and this will involve representing the Institute with its stakeholders, including Government. The Committee noted that the appointment as Chair increases the potential risk of providing Chatham House with an unfair advantage; not least as Government is an existing institutional donor to Chatham House. The Committee would therefore wish to draw your attention to the lobbying ban set out below, which makes clear that it would be inappropriate to use your contacts made in office to secure funding for Chatham House.

The Committee also noted it is relevant to this application that 18 months have now passed since you left office and this remains an unpaid role for a not-for-profit think-tank focusing on international affairs.

Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you as a Minister;
- for two years from your last day in service, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This is not intended to prevent you from having routine contact with Government in your role as a Chair of the Council. However, it would prevent you from making use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in Government to secure funding on behalf of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

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 inform us as soon as you take up the position of Chair of the Council, 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 Rules and the Ministerial Code.

Please also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.

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.

The Baroness Browning

The Rt Hon Lord O'Neill of Gatley

