



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

28 August 2018

By email:

Dear I

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), which we received on 9 August 2018.

In your request, you asked for *'full disclosure as to whether Mr Johnson has made an application to you in relation to his new position, and what advice you were able to give him before he started his column.'*

Background

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) is independent from Government and its role is to provide advice on applications submitted under the Government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules). In doing so it considers the risks posed by an application and advises on the conditions that should apply. It is not ACOPA's role to pass judgment on the appointment/ employment with regard to other matters.

The Rules for former Ministers seek to counter suspicion that:

1. 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
2. an employer could make improper use of official information to which a former Minister has had access; or
3. there may be cause for concern about the appointment in some other particular respect.

Response

I can confirm that Mr Johnson sought retrospective advice from ACOPA on his appointment to *The Telegraph*. Due to the timing of his application, the Committee refused to provide

advice prior to him taking up the role. Please find the attached correspondence, which is also available on our website, sent to Mr Johnson on 8 August, which details ACOBA's position on the matter. As you can see, although the Committee refused to provide advice in this case, the letter sets out ACOBA's views; and steps taken by Mr Johnson to limit the risks associated with the Rules in this case.

Next steps

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may write to the senior manager with responsibility for ACOBA, Peter Lawrence, at the address below to ask for an internal review. Please note that we will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

Peter Lawrence
Room G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ
Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

If you are not then content with the reply, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Parkington
Committee Secretariat