

*From the Chair*



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

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You approached the Committee about taking up an appointment as Senior Independent Non-Executive Director at Parkour UK.

The Committee's role and remit

As you will be aware, it is the Committee's role to advise on the 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.

It is not the Committee's role to pass judgment on whether an appointment is appropriate or suitable in any other regard.

Appointment details

You told the Committee that following an open recruitment process, you have been offered the position of Senior Independent Non-Executive Director (NED) at Parkour UK.

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According to their website, established in 2009 Parkour UK as the National Governing Body for Parkour/Freerunning, provide governance and regulation of Parkour/Freerunning throughout the UK. They also act as custodians of the sport/art, protect the rights & freedoms and promote the interests of Traceurs/Freerunners (practitioners), their member organisations & the UK community.

You said it is an unpaid role and will include the following tasks:

- providing a sounding board for the Independent Chair;
- serving as an intermediary for other Directors when necessary;
- acting as an alternative contact for stakeholders to share any concerns if the normal channels of the Independent Chair fails to resolve the matter or in cases where such contact is appropriate; and
- leading on the process to appraise the Independent Chair's performance

You said the role will not involve contact with the UK Government or your former department.

You informed the Committee that the only official dealings with Parkour UK took place in January 2017. As the minister in post at the time, you announced Parkour was now formally recognised as a sport with a functioning governing body. You confirmed this had been in the pipeline prior to you joining DCMS.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) was consulted regarding this appointment. DCMS confirmed you attended the event to formally recognise Parkour as a sport; and in doing so you briefly met the chairman - in keeping line with your role as the then Minister for sport.

### The Committee's consideration

The Committee<sup>1</sup> noted the only official contact you had with Parkour UK was around the announcement made when Parkour UK was officially recognised as an official governing body. The Committee placed weight on your confirmation this decision was already in train, before your time as Minister and that DCMS confirmed you made no decisions in office that were specific to Parkour UK. Further, the Committee noted you obtained this unpaid role through an open recruitment process. It therefore assessed the risk of this appointment being seen as a reward for decisions made in office as low.

When considering your application the Committee took into account that your role as NED as set out above does not involve direct contact with Government. However, as this is a National Governing Body, Parkour UK can apply to the Government for funding. The Committee applied the lobbying ban below to make clear that it would be inappropriate for you to make use of your contacts in Government/Whitehall to provide Parkour UK with an unfair advantage over other charities. DCMS do not have any particular concerns about this appointment and the Committee considers any remaining risks are mitigated given all former Ministers are prevented from drawing on privileged information they had access to in ministerial office.

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Browning; Lord Michael German; Terence Jagger; Baroness Helen Liddell; Richard Thomas and John Wood. Dr Susan Liautaud was unavailable.

*From the Chair*

Taking into account the specific facts in this case, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises the 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; 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 Parkour UK or its or clients. Neither should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in Government to influence policy or secure business or funding on their behalf.

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 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.*"

The Committee also notes that in addition to the conditions imposed on this appointment, there are separate rules in place with regard to your role in the House of Commons.

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up this 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 the organisation as depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

The Baroness Browning

Ms Tracey Crouch MP

