



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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April 2020

1. You sought advice on taking up an appointment as Managing Director of the Farmers Union of Wales Insurance Services (FUWIS). The Committee received your application on 6 March 2020. This was after the appointment had been announced through a press release on the FUWIS website on 3 March.
2. The Government's Business Appointment Rules apply by virtue of the Ministerial Code, paragraph 7.25 of which states that Ministers must *'seek advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) about any appointments or employment they wish to take up within two years of leaving office. Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before the Committee has been able to provide its advice.'* You explained that the announcement specified a start date of 6 April, something you had agreed with FUWIS to allow time for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to approve the appointment and for the Committee to provide its advice. You said the press release was needed to satisfy an FCA requirement to notify stakeholders of senior management changes.
3. The press release made no mention of the appointment being subject to the Committee's advice. In any event, it remains the case that it was in breach of the requirement in the Ministerial Code that new appointments must not be announced before the Committee has been able to provide its advice.
4. To fulfil the remit given to it by the Government, the Committee needs to be able to consider an application fully and freely before offering its advice. It is impossible to do this in a way that will command public confidence if an appointment has already been announced and/or taken up. The Committee has nonetheless contacted the Welsh Office who said you did not deal with insurance issues or meet with FUWIS during

From the Chair

your time in office. The Committee also notes you left office in July 2018, some 21 months ago.

5. It therefore recognises that the risks associated with this application are low, but nonetheless finds it unacceptable that you made your application retrospectively, in a clear breach of the Ministerial Code.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Guto ap Owain Bebb