



## OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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### **BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: MR JOHN JAMES PULLINGER CB**

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application for Mr John James Pullinger CB, former UK National Statistician from July 2014 until June 2019, he was also the Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority. He has executive responsibility for the Office for National Statistics (ONS). He requested the Committee's advice on taking up a commission with the Nuffield Foundation.
2. His last day in post and Crown Service was 30 June 2019.

#### The application

3. Mr Pullinger sought the Committee's advice about taking up a commission with Nuffield Foundation under his independent consultancy. The Committee has now considered this commission.
4. Mr Pullinger said The Nuffield Foundation (the Foundation) was established in 1943 and aims to improve social well-being by funding research and innovation in education, justice and welfare. The website said The Nuffield Foundation is an independent charitable trust with a mission to advance educational opportunity and social well-being. It funds research that informs '*...social policy, primarily in Education, Welfare and Justice. We also provide opportunities for young people to develop skills and confidence in science and research*'. The website stated its income comes from the '*...interest on our investments*'. It does not fundraise or receive funding from the Government, making it financially and politically independent. In his role as trustee he said he will support the Chair in guiding the strategy and grant giving activities of the Foundation.
5. He informed the Committee two years ago he was invited as a guest speaker to a Trustee meeting. He has also met several of the Trustees at other events on infrequent occasions. However, he confirmed: he was not involved in the development of policy; he was not involved in the award of grants; was not involved in regulatory work affecting them; did not meet with competitors of the Foundation and did not have access to sensitive information on competitors
6. The Office for National Statistics and the Cabinet Office provided their view on his application and confirmed the details provided. The Cabinet Office said it has no reservations

about this appointment in light of the conditions applied under the Business Appointment Rules. The Office for National Statistics also had no concerns.

#### Committee's consideration

7. The Committee<sup>1</sup> considered this commission to be consistent with the description of Mr Pullinger's consultancy which he described as work comprising on:

- Short term contracts in his areas of expertise - advising on matters such as the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of quantitative information.
- Advice might also involve matters such as leadership, strategy and governance, for example in Non-Executive Director positions.

8. When considering this application the Committee took into account that while he attended meetings with the Trustees of the Foundation, this was two years ago and he had no dealings in policy or funding decisions affecting the company whilst in office. As such it is not aware of any reason it might be perceived this appointment is a reward for decisions or actions taken in office.

9. Based on the information from the departments, the Committee considered the risk attached to his access to information as the National Statistician was low, especially given the time that has passed since he left office. However, the Committee would draw his attention to the conditions below which note he must not draw on privileged information (for example, as yet unannounced data and reporting he had access to).

10. There are also inherent risks attached as it may be perceived he has contacts and/or influence that might assist the company unfairly. The conditions attached to his consultancy make it clear that any use of his contacts gained in Government/Crown Service to the advantage of the company would be inappropriate.

11. The Prime Minister, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, has accepted the Committee's advice that this commission **The Nuffield Foundation** be subject to the same conditions as his independent consultancy:

- He should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its Arms Length Bodies on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government, Arms Length Bodies and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not provide advice to any company or organisation on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid or contract with, or relating directly to the work of the UK Government or its Arms Length Bodies; and

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Dr Susan Liautaud; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty and John Wood..

- for two years from his last day in Crown service, before accepting any commissions for his independent consultancy and or/before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his commissions, he should seek advice from the Committee. The Committee will decide whether each commission is consistent with the terms of the consultancy and consider any relevant factors under the Business Appointment Rules.

12. 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.

13. 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."

14. I should be grateful if you could let me know when Mr Pullinger takes up this commission, or if it is announced that he is to do so. This will enable the Committee to publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Wynn  
**Committee Secretariat**