

# Baroness Verma of Leicester



Rt. Hon. Lord Pickles  
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments  
Room G/8, 1 Horse Guards Road  
London, SW1A 2HQ

24.9.2020

Dear Lord Pickles

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for kindly giving me the opportunity to provide a full explanation of my failure to seek advice from the Committee after leaving Government.

You have rightly pointed out in your letter that I sought and received advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments in regard to taking up my position of Director at Domiciliary Care Services (UK) Ltd, an adult social provider, a position that I had held previous to my ministerial roles. It was a paid position and the advice I received was that I could return as a Director and was I was asked for assurances that I would not engage in lobbying government on behalf of the social care sector for up to two years, and those assurances were provided by me.

I want to place on record my most sincere apologies to the Committee for not understanding the rules and the concern this has caused the Committee.

I now understand that as per the requirements of the rules, I should have sought advice from the Committee for up to two years after leaving government for any appointment, including those that were advisory or unpaid. Regrettably this was a huge misunderstanding on my part.

I acknowledge my failure in seeking advice on the acceptance of my unpaid non-executive advisory role at Nexus Green. To provide clarity, the role was to engage directly with the CEO on governance matters and best practice. My son, who is the CEO of the company, asked me to join, in an advisory capacity only because of my many years of business experience. I wish to assure the Committee that I have had no decision-making role in the business and no executive powers, and this remains the position now.

I would like to assure the Committee that in keeping with the advice previously received and assurances I gave regarding my role as a Director of Domiciliary Care Services (UK) Ltd to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, that there have been no undertakings in my role at Nexus Green, that have been other than advisory on governance and best practice. I have not engaged in or involved myself in any lobbying or negotiations on behalf of the business. I have no executive powers and my role directly engages with the CEO. On occasions when I have accompanied the CEO, it was to observe and ensure good governance and that best business practice is met.

You asked for clarification on an event that was held in London in September 2015, attended by ministers and officials from Uganda to discuss investment opportunities. I want to confirm to the Committee that I did not attend this event. I always sought advice from my officials on all invitations that I received as a minister. My name was on the guest list, but the invitation was declined. I am attaching a letter from the Hon. Consulate for Uganda, Mr Kapasi, who was involved in the organisation of the convention to confirm this. I would also like to confirm that Nexus Green did not exist as a business in September 2015.

I would like to provide the Committee my assurance that I was not involved in any meetings whilst serving as a minister for or on behalf of Nexus Green. I left Government in July 2016 and did not take up my advisory role at Nexus Green until March 2018. Since joining Nexus Green, my role remains specific to those of governance and best business practice. I do not have any involvement in decision making on behalf of Nexus Green internally or externally.

In taking on the advisory role with Nexus Green I have not been present at any negotiation meetings between Nexus Green and their clients, nor met privately any ministers or officials from Uganda to discuss potential business opportunities for Nexus Green, either as a minister or on leaving government. I have never on any occasion received, nor been offered, any remuneration from Nexus Green.

I am truly sorry for my misunderstanding of the rules, which I accept is my failing and sincerely hope that the Committee will accept my deepest regret at this failure. I would not deliberately disrespect the rules and sincerely apologise to the Committee. I strongly advocate the importance of good governance and best practice and would like to provide the Committee my complete assurance of commitment to practicing that in my role at Nexus Green.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandip', written in a cursive style.

Baroness Verma