



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Jonathan Slater, Black Thrive

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application for Jonathan Slater, former Permanent Secretary for the Department for Education between May 2016 - August 2020. His last day in service was 1 September 2020.

Application details

2. Mr Slater sought advice on taking up a role as a Volunteer with Black Thrive. Mr Slater said Black Thrive is a charity working to improve services for Black people in Lambeth with mental illnesses. The website states since the 1950's Lambeth has been home to the UK's biggest Black community with people of African and Caribbean origin. Black Thrive is a partnership between communities, statutory organisations, voluntary and private sector. These organisations work together to reduce the inequality and injustices experienced by Black people in mental health services. They address the barriers which lead to poorer outcomes across a range of social factors, such as education, employment, housing, and so on, all of which may negatively impact one's health and wellbeing.

3. Mr Slater told the Committee he has been invited to volunteer with the charity in the work it is doing with South Lambeth & Maudsley Mental Health NHS Trust, Lambeth Council, and other local partners to improve services for Black people with mental illnesses in Lambeth. He said he will be attending meetings with the charity and its partners, doing data analysis, and reading reports, in order to come up with recommendations for action. He does not expect his role to involve contact with the Government.

4. Mr Slater informed the Committee he had no contact with Black Thrive during his time in service and had no involvement in any decisions affecting the Charity and was not involved in relevant policy work during his time in service. Further, there is no

relationship between his former department, the Department for Education (DfE) and Black Thrive.

5. DfE and the Cabinet Office provided their views on this application. Both Departments confirmed the details provided and said Mr Slater's former role was both high profile and senior but in a different sector to the organisation being considered here. It said this is an application seeking approval to undertake unpaid voluntary work with a charity with which Mr Slater had no previous dealings in his former role. As such it is unlikely to be perceived as a reward, nor will it put him in conflict with his former department. It has no concerns with Mr Slater taking up this role.

The Committee's Consideration

6. The Committee¹ noted that his role is not directly related to his time in office. It particularly noted he had no dealings with the organisation whilst in office; and it is aware of no reason it might be perceived this appointment is a reward for decisions or actions taken in office.

7. The Committee noted, there are inherent risks that Mr Slater will undoubtedly have general access to policy and information that could be perceived to benefit Black Thrive. However, Mr Slater has not had access or involvement with any relevant policy in his recent position in Crown service and his proposed work is unrelated to his work at DfE. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk he could offer an unfair advantage to Black Thrive through his access to sensitive information is low. However, the Committee would also draw his attention to the ban on using privileged information.

8. Additionally, there is a general risk Mr Slater may offer an unfair advantage to the organisation in relation to access to the contacts he gained while in service. The lobbying restriction imposed below makes clear that it would be inappropriate for him to use his contacts to the unfair advantage of the organisation. Further, he is prevented from providing advice on bids and contracts with the UK Government, mitigating the risk of impropriety in relation to Mr Slater's contacts and influence across the Government. However, the Committee noted this was in keeping with his role as described.

9. The Prime Minister, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, has accepted the Committee's advice that this appointment with **Black Thrive** should be subject to the following conditions:

¹ This application for advice was considered by Jonathan Baume; Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doverty; Sarah de Gay; Dr Susan Liautaud; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; and Lord Larry Whitty.

- 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 on behalf of Black Thrive (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Black Thrive (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not undertake any work with Black Thrive (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) that involves providing advice on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK Government.

10. 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.

11. 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.*"

12. I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as Jonathan Slater takes up this appointment, or if it is announced that he 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 he has complied with the Rules.

13. Please also inform us if Jonathan Slater proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of appointment as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for her to make a fresh application.

14. Once the 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.

Yours Sincerely,

Isabella Wynn
Committee Secretariat