



Lord True CBE
Minister of State
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Our reference: MC2021/08594

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments
G/08 Ground Floor
1 Horse Guards Road
SW1A 2HQ
By email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

07 May 2021

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your letter of 21 April, regarding George Freeman's work with Aerosol Shield Ltd, Ryse Hydrogen, Resume Foundation, Reform for Resilience and Haemcro.

I agree that Mr Freeman breached the Government's Business Appointment Rules in relation to these appointments. From the correspondence, I can see that Mr Freeman has apologised to the Committee.

I understand that with the exception of his work with Aerosol Shield Ltd, the work in question has been unremunerated and that these roles do not appear to have a relationship with the Department for Transport. I also note that Mr Freeman duly declared all reportable interests to the House of Commons Registrar, and such interests were published online on his Register of Interests; whilst he may not have registered these with ACOBA, there was clearly no intent to conceal such interests from the public. The public recognition that Mr Freeman did not adhere to the rules means that current and future employers, as well as the public can take this into account.

Former Ministers remain personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Ministerial Code and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public. This includes following the correct process for seeking advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.

As you are aware, the Cabinet Office is working with your Committee to improve the operation and efficacy of the Business Appointment Rules. This will include assessing the range of sanctions and also how business appointment conditions should be proportionate to risk, as well as whether a lighter touch regime is appropriate for unpaid, voluntary roles with not-for-profit organisations. The Boardman review will also bring insight to this broader review.

I would like to thank the Committee for your ongoing work on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'True', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left from the top of the 'T'.

Lord True CBE