



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox, former Secretary of State for International Trade, Speaker, JLA Speakers.

1. You sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) on an appointment you wish to take up with JLA Speakers as a public speaker. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.

2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during time in office, alongside the information and influence a former minister may offer JLA Speakers.

3. The Rules set out that ministers must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former Ministers are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's consideration of the risks presented

4. The Committee¹ noted that you did not meet with JLA Speakers and there is no relationship between the Department for International Trade and JLA Speakers. Further, the department confirmed you did not make any decisions specific to JLA Speakers. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk you could be seen to have been offered this role as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office, was low.

5. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any proprietary concerns under the Government's Business Appointment Rules. It also noted that while your role and seniority would have given you access to a wide range of government information from your time in office, it is reasonable to assume that

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

much of this would now be outdated given you left your role as Secretary of State in July 2019. However, the Committee would like to draw your attention to the conditions below. In particular, the restriction that you should not draw on privileged information available to you from your time in office.

The Committee's Advice

6. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **JLA Speakers** be subject to the following conditions:

- that you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from Ministerial office;
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government on behalf of **JLA Speakers** (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the government and/or ministerial contacts to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly benefit **JLA Speakers** (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you 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.

7. The Committee also notes that in addition to the conditions imposed on this appointment, there are separate rules in place with regard to your role as a member of the House of Commons.

8. 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 or otherwise.

9. 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.*"

10. We should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as

you take up this position, or if it is announced that you will do so. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you have complied with the Rules.

11. You must also inform the Committee if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of this work as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.

12. Once this commission has been publicly announced or is live we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Sophie Weymes-McElderry
Committee Secretariat

Annex A - Material information

The role

1. You said JLA Speakers is a speakers bureau. Its website says JLA Speakers is *'the UK's biggest specialist agency for keynote, motivational and after dinner speakers, conference presenters, awards hosts and cabaret for corporate, industry and public sector events'*.
2. You said this is not a full-time or part-time appointment as work will be issued on an ad-hoc basis, but you will be represented by JLA Speakers for corporate speaking events. You said no minimum or maximum appearances have been agreed, and you will be paid per event. You do not expect his role to involve contact with the UK government.

Dealings in office

3. You said you did not meet with JLA Speakers; there is no relationship between JLA Speakers and the Department for International Trade; and you have no involvement in policy relevant to JLA Speakers; nor make any decisions affecting JLA Speakers while in post.

Department Assessment

4. The Department for International Trade confirmed the details given in your application. The department had no concerns with regards to this application and recommended the standards bans on privileged information, lobbying, and bids and contracts be applied.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

The Rt Hon Liam Fox MP