



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: [acoba@acoba.gov.uk](mailto:acoba@acoba.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

August 2021

**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Professor Ciaran Martin CB, Chief Executive at National Cyber Security Centre 2014 - August 2020**

1. Professor Martin, former Chief Executive at National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), part of Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), has sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Crown servants (the Rules) on an appointment he wishes to take up with Nineteen Group (Nineteen) as Chair of the Nineteen Cyber Security Advisory Board. 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 Crown servant may offer Nineteen.

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

The Committee's advice

4. The Committee<sup>1</sup> noted that Professor Martin did not meet with Nineteen and the department confirmed he did not make any decisions specific to Nineteen and there is some limited overlap between this role and his time in office. The Committee

---

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

considered the risk he 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 took into account that Professor Martin met with potential competitors of Nineteen while in office, but these meetings were at conferences and other similar events. Further, the Committee noted he did not make any funding or policy decisions directly affecting Nineteen or its competitors.

6. The Committee noted that this proposed role has a limited overlap with Professor Martin's time in office - given cyber focus of Nineteen's events. Therefore, there could be a perceived risk he had access to relevant privileged information and knowledge, which could unfairly benefit Nineteen. However, Professor Martin's previous department, NCSC, has a purpose and commitment to be transparent; 9 months have passed since Professor Martin was in office; GCHQ has no concerns and he has an ongoing duty of confidentiality.

7. As above the Committee recognised that the risks in this appointment are limited. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular proprietary concerns under the Government's Business Appointment Rules. The standard conditions below, preventing him from drawing on his privileged information and using his contacts to the unfair advantage of their new employer, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case.

8. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **Nineteen Group** be subject to the following conditions:

- 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 Nineteen Group (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 of Nineteen Group (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 Nineteen Group (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.

9. Professor Martin must inform us as soon as he takes up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that he will do so and we will publish this letter on our website.

10. Any failure to do so may lead to a false assumption being made about whether they have complied with the Rules.

11. Professor Martin must inform us if they propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of their role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for them to make a fresh application.

12. Once the appointment(s) has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and where appropriate refer to in the annual report.

Yours sincerely

Sophie Weymes-McElderry  
**Committee Secretariat**

## **Annex A - Material information**

### The role

1. Professor Martin said Nineteen is an exhibition and conference organiser. The website states Nineteen '*...is a rapidly expanding, dynamic and ambitious events business*'. It states it does this through:

- Organising major-scale trade exhibitions within the security, fire, emergency services, facilities management and maintenance engineering sectors
- Creating platforms for communities to engage and innovate, with a track record for attracting leading business decision makers
- Hosting the International Cyber Expo, featuring more than 350 leading Cyber exhibitors

2. Professor Martin said his role as Chair of the Nineteen Cyber Security Advisory Board will involve 2 days of work, chairing the International Cyber Expo and The

Security Event, both in September 2021. He does not expect his role to involve contact with government.

#### Dealings in office

3. Professor Martin said he did not have any dealings with Nineteen and did not meet them while he was in office, nor prior to his appointment, but did meet with potential competitors at other conferences.

4. Professor Martin confirmed he did not have any involvement in policy relevant to Nineteen nor did he make any decisions affecting Nineteen while in post. He also said he did not have access to sensitive information relevant to Nineteen.

#### Department Assessment

5. GCHQ confirmed the details given in Professor Martin's application and stated it had no relationship with or commercial insights into Nineteen. It also stated Professor Martin's experience as CEO of NCSC gave him access to the UK's cyber security policy but stated this is generally already available to the public. The department had no concerns with regards to this application.