



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

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The Baroness Verma  
House of Lords  
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18 September 2020

I am writing to you, as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments following your recent contact with our Secretariat and media interest in your role at Nexus Green.

You informed the Committee that you took an unpaid role as Director for Nexus Green, which is your son's company, in March 2018. You apologised for not seeking the Committee's advice, identifying this as a failing on your part and noted that you previously sought advice for your appointment as Director at DCS UK Ltd in 2016.

The Government's Business Appointment Rules apply by virtue of the Ministerial Code, which states (in paragraph 7.25) that Ministers must '*seek advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) about **any appointments or employment** [my emphasis] they wish to take up within two years of leaving office. Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before the Committee has been able to provide its advice.*'

I was therefore concerned to see commentary in the media suggesting you did not need to seek ACOBA's advice in this instance<sup>1</sup>. This is clearly not the case and I note that separately, you contacted the Committee to apologise, recognising you should have sought advice at the time. Failure to seek advice is a clear breach of the requirement set out in the Ministerial Code and the Government's Business Appointment Rules.

In line with our policy of transparency, I will be publishing our correspondence in due course. Should you wish me to include an explanation of how you ensured propriety in this appointment given your previous role as a government minister, please reply to this letter before Monday 28 September 2020. Any failure to respond will also be noted in the publication.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

The Baroness Verma

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/sep/03/tory-peer-sandip-verma-accused-of-breaching-ministerial-code-with-uganda-deal>