



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

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1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for former ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up an appointment as Volunteer Business Advisory Board Member for Warsash Maritime School (Warsash). The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex below.
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 Warsash.
3. The Ministerial Code sets 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 of the Crown, and Members of Parliament, are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's consideration

4. When considering this application, the Committee¹ took into account this role as Volunteer Business Advisory Board Member is unpaid. Generally, the Committee's experience is that the risks related to unpaid roles are limited. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government by considering the real and perceived risks associated with former ministers using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent; and to mitigate the risks that individuals may make decisions or take action in office to in expectation of rewards, on leaving government. These risks

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.

are significantly limited in unpaid cases due to the lack of financial gain to the individual.

5. The Committee noted you briefly visited the College on a regional tour. The Department for Transport (DfT) also confirmed you approved a funding increase for seafarer training in 2018 via the Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) scheme. Though Warsash benefited from this, the funding was provided to shipping companies and training providers, not the colleges themselves. As such, this was an indirect benefit to all UK training providers, and was not a decision specific to Warsash. Further, given the unpaid nature of this work, the risk that this role was offered as a reward for actions taken in office is limited.
6. The Committee noted that as the former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, there is an inherent risk you could be perceived as having access to relevant privileged information and knowledge which could unfairly benefit Warsash. However, the unpaid nature of this appointment, the fact that almost 21 months have passed since you left office and your ongoing duty of confidentiality limits the real and perceived risk of you making improper use of information you had access to while in office.

The Committee's advice

7. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular proprietary concerns under the government's Business Appointment Rules. The standard conditions below, preventing you from drawing on your privileged information and using your contacts to the unfair advantage of their new employer, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case. The Committee would draw your attention to the below lobbying and contracts and bids ban that includes governments' arms' length bodies.
8. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **Warsash Maritime School** be subject to the following conditions:
 - you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in ministerial office;
 - for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK or its arms' length bodies on behalf of Warsash Maritime School (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Warsash Maritime School (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
 - for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with Warsash Maritime School (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 or its arms' length bodies.

9. 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.
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.*" This Rule is separate and not a replacement for the Rules in the House.
12. I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up this role, 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 that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Rules and the Ministerial Code.
13. Please also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you 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.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Nusrat Ghani MP

Annex - Material information

The role

1. You seek to join Warsash in an unpaid, part-time role as a Volunteer Business Advisory Board Member.
2. Warsash is a maritime training college that is part of Solent University. The College's website says it provides '*...high-quality education and training for the maritime and offshore industries to meet the international demand for crew, officers and captains who are trained to the highest professional standards*'. Warsash also carries out research in fields such as '*health and safety, gender and seafarer welfare*', and offers consultancy services for '*bridge and engine room team development*'.
3. You described this role as a '*...volunteer post with 3 meetings a year at around 2 hrs at a time to help students and the school board improve success rates and shape future developments*'.
4. You said this appointment is not likely to include any contact or dealings with your former department or government more generally.

Dealings in office

5. You said you visited the College whilst in office on a regional tour in 2019.

Department Assessment

6. The Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed the details you provided.
7. The DfT noted Warsash '*The University ...is a stakeholder and there is infrequent contact between officials and the university on matters relating to maritime training. Cadets from Warsash are invited to attend the Merchant Navy Medal ceremony each year. The University's former Vice-Chancellor took up the post of Chair of the Maritime Skills Commission (unpaid) in January 2020.*'
8. The DfT noted that during a visit in May 2018, Ms Ghani visited Southampton including Warsash Maritime Academy, DP World Port and a cruise ship.
9. The DfT said you did make a decision in office that impacted the sector generally: '*...funding was increased for seafarer training in 2018 through the Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) scheme, enabling the annual intake of UK cadets to rise from 750 to 1200*'. The department said although SMarT funding is paid directly to shipping companies and training providers who sponsor the cadets, Warsash, as well as City of Glasgow College, Lairdside

Maritime Centre in Liverpool, Fleetwood Nautical Campus, NAFC Marine Centre, University of Plymouth and the South Shields Marine School '*...stood to benefit from potential increased cadet numbers*'.

10. The DfT said as Ms Ghani left office in February 2020, she does not have access to any sensitive information in relation to a relevant policy area and had no concerns with this appointment.