



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS
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BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FOR ADVICE: Phil Jones, former Executive Director of the Defence Digital Unit at the Ministry of Defence. A paid appointment with Aspen Insurance Group (Aspen).

1. Mr Jones 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 Mr Jones wishes to take up with Aspen Insurance UK, Aspen Insurance Group (Aspen). 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 Aspen.
3. The Committee has advised that a number of conditions be imposed to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with this appointment under the Rules; this does not imply the Committee has taken a view on the appropriateness of this appointment for a former Executive Director at the Ministry of Defence in any other respect.
4. The Rules¹ 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 consideration

5. Mr Jones did not meet with Aspen nor their competitors whilst in post; and he made no decisions specific to Aspen. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not have a relationship, commercial or otherwise with Aspen. The Committee

¹ Which apply by virtue of the Civil Service Management Code, The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, The Queen's Regulations and the Diplomatic Service Code

considered that the risk he was offered this role as a reward for decisions or actions taken in post is low.

6. As the former Executive Director of the Defence Digital Unit at the MOD, the Committee noted it likely he would have gained general information that could be beneficial to any organisation. However the Committee considered it relevant that Mr Jones is going to work in the finance sector, which is unrelated to his time at the MOD, working in defence, significantly reducing risk here. The Committee also considered it relevant that there is no direct overlap with the department's policy, regulation or commercial activities regarding Aspen.

7. There is an inherent risk associated with Mr Jones's influence and network in government, specifically if he was to use this to advice on a bid or contract with government, or to lobby the government. Though the Committee notes this is in keeping with his role as described.

The Committee's advice

8. The Committee determined the risks above can be appropriately mitigated by the standard conditions that apply, below. Further, the Committee wishes to make it explicit that it would be inappropriate for Mr Jones to use any information he has gained to the unfair advantage of Aspen.

9. The Committee's advice in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules is that this role with Aspen Insurance Group be subject to the below 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 or any of its Arm's Length Bodies on behalf of Aspen Insurance Group (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 advantage Aspen Insurance Group (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not provide advice to Aspen Insurance Group 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 or any of its Arm's Length Bodies; and

10. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your previous role in government only; they are separate to rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists or the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It is an applicant's

personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

11. 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 Ministerial Code/Civil Service Code or otherwise.

12. 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.*"

13. Mr Jones must inform us as soon as he takes up this work or if it is announced that he 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 Mr Jones has complied with the Civil Service code. Similarly, he must inform us if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation as depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary for him to seek fresh advice.

14. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website.

Andrea Benjamin
Committee Secretariat

Annex - Material information

The role

1. Mr Jones stated Aspen is an insurance company. Their global speciality insurance and reinsurance includes casualty finpro, first party and speciality, and capital partners.
2. Mr Jones stated this is a full time position that will not involve contact with the government. He will have the role of Chief Information Officer and his role will be:
 - *'Responsible for IT / Digital Function globally*
 - *Day to delivery IT Service Operations ('Keeping the lights on' activity)*
 - *IT / Digital Delivery*
 - *IT / Digital Strategy*
 - *IT / Digital Security*
 - *IT / Digital Architecture'*

Dealings in office

4. Mr Jones stated he neither had any dealings with, nor met with nor made any decisions on Aspen or their competitors. while in post.
5. He does not know of any relationship between the organisation and his former department.

Department Assessment

6. The Ministry of Defence confirmed the details provided by Mr Jones. It added that it does not have a relationship with Aspen, contractual or otherwise.
7. It recommended that the standard conditions on privileged information, lobbying and advising on a bid or contract with the government be applied. It also stated: *'There is no knowledge that the applicant has gained while employed by the MoD that will be commercially advantageous to him or his future employee. Given the [entirely] different employment fields involved, [there] can be no objections from related companies.'* It further stated: *'Given the lack of connection between MoD and the appointing organisation, there should be no consideration of undue advantage and no concerns of perception to counter this view.'*