



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

27 January 2023

Dear Oliver

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) to bring to your attention the correspondence I have sent to the Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, enclosed.

As you are aware, the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) are set by the government, with the policy owned by the Cabinet Office. The Committee is independent, with a remit to consider applications received under those Rules, consider the risks and advise on the conditions that should apply.

Ms Dorries today informed the Committee that she will be hosting a weekly chat show on Talk TV for 26 weeks. Ms Dorries has also today confirmed to the media that she will be taking up this role¹ starting on 3 February. Ms Dorries did not seek ACOBA's advice for this.

In the Committee's experience, the risks under the Rules in these types of appointments are usually limited. Previous advice for media roles, for example writing a column, have generally been subject to a standard set of conditions preventing

¹<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jan/27/nadine-dorries-to-interview-boris-johnson-on-launch-of-her-talktv-show>
<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/nadine-dorries-interview-boris-johnson-talktv-jacob-rees-mogg-gb-news-2111300>

individuals from: drawing on privileged information; and lobbying the UK government - in particular around regulatory and funding decisions where relevant.

The Ministerial Code is clear that an application for advice is required for all outside roles- no matter the potential limitation in the risk.

It is a matter for you to decide what appropriate action to take. However, given the transparent nature of Ms Dorrie's role which is limited to presenting (not dealing with the commercial aspects of Talk TV business) I believe it would be disproportionate to take any further action in this case.

This case is a further illustration of how out of date the government's Rules are. I know that you personally share my view that the Rules require revising and I look forward to working with you to achieve this as soon as possible

It is the Committee's policy to act transparently, including making public any failure to follow the Rules, or the Committee's advice, that it is made aware of.

*Yours ever
Sue Pickles*

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Copied to: Darren Tierney, Director general, Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office and The Rt Hon Jeremy Quin MP, Paymaster General and Minister for Cabinet Office



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27 January 2023

Dear Nadine

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 Talk TV.

You informed the Secretariat today that you will be hosting a weekly chat show on Talk TV for 26 weeks. You have also today confirmed in the media² that you will start this role on 3 February.

ACOBA does not seek to stop ministers from expressing their views generally or taking part in televised talk shows. However, the government's Business Appointment Rules³ are clear that an application is required for all outside roles. As such, failing to seek and await advice before the role was announced or taken up in this case is a breach of the government's Rules and the requirements set out in the ministerial code.

In the Committee's experience, the risks under the Rules in these types of appointments are usually limited. Previous advice for media roles have generally been subject to a standard set of conditions preventing individuals from: drawing on privileged information; and lobbying the UK government.

ACOBA encourages early approaches if applicants are unsure about whether an application is required. Had you approached ACOBA in good time before agreeing to the 26 week contract or publicising the role in the media it would have allowed us to advise you appropriately in advance.

²<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jan/27/nadine-dorries-to-interview-boris-johnson-on-launch-of-her-talktv-show>
<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/nadine-dorries-interview-boris-johnson-talktv-jacob-rees-mogg-gb-news-2111300>

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governments-business-appointment-rules-for-former-ministers/guidance-on-making-an-application-to-acoba-ministers>

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

In line with the Committee's policy of transparency, correspondence on this matter will be published on our website; and will be reported to the Cabinet Office, as the owner of the Rules.

Yours ever
Sue Pickles

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles