



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/8, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

By email

27 June 2023

Dear Boris

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA). The Committee is independent from government, with a remit to consider applications received under those Business Appointment Rules (the Rules), consider the risks and advise on the conditions that should apply.

As you will be aware, the requirement to seek and abide by ACOBA's advice is set out clearly in the Ministerial Code, including specifically that: '*...Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before the Committee has been able to provide its advice.*'

The announcement of your column in the Daily Mail was a clear and unambiguous breach of the Rules and the requirements set out in the Ministerial Code - both of which you are familiar with. ACOBA's established practice is not to provide advice in these circumstances.

Please see the correspondence enclosed, reporting this matter to the government, as the owners of the Rules. In line with ACOBA's commitment to transparency, the exchange of correspondence on this matter is copied below. In line with ACOBA's commitment to transparency, all correspondence will be published on the website.

Sue Pickett

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Exchange of emails between ACOBA's secretariat and Mr Johnson/his office

Email from The Office of Boris Johnson, Friday 16 June 17:41

I can confirm on behalf of Mr Johnson that this is correct, yes.

Shelley Williams-Walker

Email from the ACOBA Secretariat to The Office of Boris Johnson, Friday 16 June 17:27

Dear Mr Johnson,

Thank you for your email.

Is this announcement on Twitter and video of you posted on the Daily Mail Online's account correct, are you the Daily Mail's new columnist?

[https://twitter.com/MailOnline/status/1669676578303889410?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1669676578303889410%7Ctwgr%5Efc570fc303c9c3a049f567f0f1d247ee3279b69%7Ctwcon%5Es1 &ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fpolitics%2Flive%2F2023%2Fjun%2F16%2Fboris-johnson-partygate-report-rishi-sunak-damian-green-vote-conservatives-uk-politics-live](https://twitter.com/MailOnline/status/1669676578303889410?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1669676578303889410%7Ctwgr%5Efc570fc303c9c3a049f567f0f1d247ee3279b69%7Ctwcon%5Es1&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fpolitics%2Flive%2F2023%2Fjun%2F16%2Fboris-johnson-partygate-report-rishi-sunak-damian-green-vote-conservatives-uk-politics-live)

Yours sincerely,
Cat Marshall

Email from The Office of Boris Johnson, Friday 16 June 16:41

Sent on behalf of Mr Johnson:

Thank you for your letter.

You are right that I have written an article for the Daily Mail though at this moment it has not yet been published.

I have not yet signed any contract or been paid.

If you have any objection to my signing a contract in the next few weeks perhaps you could let me know.

I would appreciate an urgent reply.

Shelley Williams-Walker

Email from the ACOBA Secretariat to The Office of Boris Johnson, Friday 16 June 14:42

Good afternoon

Thank you for your email to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) enclosing Boris Johnson's application to join the Daily Mail as a columnist. It has been reported by a number of media outlets that Mr Johnson has already agreed to take up this role, starting as early as tomorrow. The media reports predate the application from, which was received at 12.31pm today, 16 June 2023.

Briefing by the proposed employer, the Daily Mail suggests the same timing on its front page this morning:<https://www.frontpages.com/daily-mail>; the application form states Mr Johnson wishes to take up the role tomorrow - Saturday 17 June; and at 1.01pm, exactly 30 mins after ACOBA received the application form, the Daily Mail announced the appointment on Twitter.

As the former Prime Minister, Mr Johnson is fully aware of his obligations under the Ministerial Code and the government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules). Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before ACOBA has been able to provide its advice. The Committee therefore seeks an explanation for this breach of the government's Rules.

Given the public interest in knowing whether the former Prime Minister has complied with government's Rules and the proposed timing in this case, I would be grateful for a response today, by 5pm Friday 16 June 2023. In line with our policy of transparency, we will be publishing our correspondence in due course.

Yours sincerely,
Cat

Cat Marshall

Email from The Office of Boris Johnson, Friday 16 June 12:31

Good morning,

Please find attached a completed form sent on behalf of Mr Johnson. Please let us know if you need any further details.

Thanks,

Shelley
Shelley Williams-Walker