



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

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### **BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Lord Bethell of Romford, former Minister of Innovation, Department of Health and Social Care. Unpaid appointment with Business for Health.**

1. You sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) on an unpaid role you want to take up with Business for Health.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during your time in office, alongside the information and influence you may offer to Business for Health. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment- it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the rules.
4. 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

5. When considering this application, the Committee<sup>1</sup> took into account this role as Board Member with Business for Health is unpaid<sup>2</sup>. 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 the former ministers joining outside organisations. Those risks include: using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent. The Rules also seek to mitigate the risks that individuals may make decisions or take action in office to in expectation of rewards, on leaving government. These risks are significantly limited in unpaid cases due to the lack of financial gain to the individual.

6. As Minister for Innovation at DHSC, this proposed role overlaps with your time in office. DHSC confirmed that you had no engagement with Business for Health. There are inherent risks associated with your access to information and a network within government. The unpaid nature of this appointment limits the real and perceived risk of you making improper use of information and contacts gained in office y

## 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 contacts to the unfair advantage of Business for Health, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case.

8. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with the **Business for Health** 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 government or its arms' length bodies on behalf of Business for Health (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

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Isabel Doverly; Sarah de Gay; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty; and Jonathan Baume. Andrew Cumptsy was absent.

<sup>2</sup> By unpaid the Committee means that no remuneration of any kind is received for the role. Applicants must declare where it is agreed or anticipated they may receive remuneration or some other compensation at some stage in the future.

advantage Business for Health (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 Business for Health (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 advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to his 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 his personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations he may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

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. You must 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. You must 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

## **Annex - Material information**

### The role

1. You said Business for Health is a business-led coalition supporting long-term sustainable innovation and investment in preventative health and care. Its aim is to enhance the health and economic resilience of the UK, catalysing and facilitating business contributions to enhance healthy life expectancy and reduce health & wellbeing inequalities.
2. You informed the Committee that your role as a Board Member with Business for Health entails- providing strategic and governance oversight for the work.
3. You said the role does not involve any contact or dealings with government.

### Dealings in office

4. You confirmed you had had no official contact with Business for Health when you were Minister of Innovation at DHSC and said you:
  - did not make decisions specific to Business for Health;
  - do not have access to sensitive information that would provide an unfair advantage;
  - had no commercial or contractual responsibilities relating to the Business for Health; and
  - did not meet with competitors of Business for Health nor have access to sensitive information regarding competitors.

### Department Assessment

5. The department confirmed the details you provided.
6. The department noted it makes policy decisions that could have affected the health sector, including Business for Health. It confirmed you have no access to sensitive information
7. The department confirmed you did not meet Business for Health in your official capacity.
8. DHSC recommended the standard conditions be applied.