



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

19 February 2025

Dear The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) regarding a failure to follow the government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) by Mark Fletcher. This is outlined in the correspondence enclosed.

The Committee is independent, with a remit to consider applications received under the Rules, consider the risks and advise on the conditions that should apply.

The Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) are set by the government, with the policy owned by the Cabinet Office. The requirement for former ministers 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.'*

Mr Fletcher acknowledged his mistake and should have sought advice before taking up the post and apologised. Failure to await advice in this case is a breach of the government's Rules.

Breaches of the Rules remain a very small proportion of the casework ACOBA sees and are most often caused by a lack of clarity by the applicant on the various processes and obligations that exist. In this case compliance with the Rules was simply not a priority for the individual. I am therefore concerned that not all former

ministers and Crown servants are sufficiently clear on the various standards of behaviour, rules and legislation that are incumbent on them. What action you now take is a matter for the government.

It is the Committee's policy to act transparently, including making public any failure to follow the Rules that it is made aware of - correspondence on this matter will be published on our website.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Pickles', written in a cursive style.

The Rt. Hon Lord Pickles

Copied to: The Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office;
Darren Tierney Director General, Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office.