

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: The Rt Hon Chloe Smith, former Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology. Unpaid appointment with the Institute for Government.

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointment Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up an unpaid role with the Institute for Government (IfG), as a Steering Group member of its IfG Academy.
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 influences you may offer IfG Academy. 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 of the risks presented

5. When considering this application, the Committee¹ took into account this appointment as a Steering Group member is unpaid². 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 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, 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. During your time as Secretary of State, you had contact with the organisation due to the IfG's work with government. There are inherent risks, as with any former minister, that you have access to information and also contacts and influence within government that could benefit the organisation.

The Committee's advice

7. The Committee considered that the risks in this application can be sufficiently mitigated by the standard conditions below, which seek to prevent you from making improper use of privileged information, contacts and influence to the unfair advantage of the organisation.
8. Therefore, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with the Institute for Government 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 the Institute for Government (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or ministerial office to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage the Institute for Government (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and

¹ This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doherty; Hedley Finn OBE; Sarah de Gay; Dawid Konotay-Ahulu OBE DL; Michael Prescott; The Baroness Thornton; and Mike Weir.

² 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.

- for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with the Institute for Government (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 your previous role in government only; they are separate from rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Registrar of Lords' Interests³. 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.
 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 Ministerial Code or otherwise.
 11. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that you "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".
 12. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that you will do so and we will publish this letter on our website. You must 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.

Isabel Doverly

Interim Chair
ACOPA

³ All Peers and Members of Parliament are prevented from paid lobbying under the House of Commons Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. Advice on obligations under the Code can be sought from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards, in the case of MPs, or the Registrar of Lords' Interests, in the case of peers.

Annex – Material Information

The role

1. The Institute for Government (IfG) is an independent think tank that examines government effectiveness in the UK.
 - It conducts analysis and provides commentary, as well as hosting public events to discuss government operations and possible improvements. The team engages in evidence-based research and data analysis, facilitating discussions among decision makers to share insights.
 - Additionally, IfG works with academic researchers, charities, businesses, and international audiences to provide information on government and policy-making processes.
2. IfG Academy is the IfG's programme that provides training and support for those working in government. For those outside government, IfG Academy aims to help individuals understand and engage with it. It provides a range of resources and tailored workshops, including:
 - sessions for ministers on utilising their time in office
 - for officials on supporting their ministers
 - and for subject specialists on engaging with policy makers.
 - you noted that the Academy is now formalising, including commercially, by joining the Government Learning Framework and updating its steering group.
3. Through your role as a Steering Group member, you stated that you will be providing strategic advice on the work of the IfG Academy.
4. You also noted that the role would not involve any contact with government.

Dealings in office

5. You said that you did not make any policy, regulatory or commercial decisions specific to IfG, and that you did not have any access to information that could grant IfG an unfair advantage. You stated that there was a relationship between IfG and DSIT through the provision of training and support on a charitable basis to the department.

Departmental assessment

6. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) confirmed the details provided in your application and approved this appointment subject to the standard conditions.