



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>

30 November 2022

Dear Mr Harri

Thank you for your response to my letter as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA), dated 13 October 2022, in which you provided additional context regarding your engagement with Chartwell Speakers.

You said you had not been engaged by this agency for a number of years but that your biography was never removed. You now inform ACOBA that you have updated the online profile listings for two speaking agencies, Chartwell¹ and Atlantic Speaker Bureau².

You are listed on a website with two speaking agencies as a former Director of Communications at Downing Street and it appears you are advertising your availability to work via them. Though you confirm you have signed no contract, received no funds, and 'there are no obligations on either side' this does not provide sufficient clarity with regards to the requirements of the Rules. For example, should you decide at a later stage to enter into a formal arrangement with these agencies, you would be open to reasonable criticism that you had advertised this work in advance of doing so without first seeking advice - which would be considered a breach of the Rules.

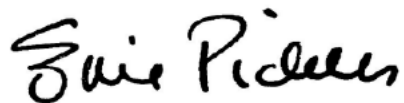
I advise that you take down these listings; and should you decide to sign up to either agency's services at a later date, this will require an application.

I understand from officials that the emails you said you had not received were sent according to our email system. These were subsequently forwarded again and I understand you have since confirmed you will abide by ACOBA's advice on your earlier applications, which you have now received.

¹ <https://www.chartwellspeakers.com/speaker/guto-harri/?event=eyJldmVudE5hbWUiOiJDbGlja2VklwiW5kZXgiOiJ3cF9wb3N0c19zcGVha2VylwiWib2JqZWNO0SURzljpbjE1ODg0LTAiXSwicG9zaXRpb25zljpbMV0sInF1ZXJ5SUQiOiI0M2NkMzZMNDQ2YT FkNzVmOGVIMjQxYWJkODQ3YzAyOSJ9>

² <http://www.atlanticspeakerbureau.com/guto-harri/speaker>

In line with our policy of transparency, I will be publishing our correspondence in due course.



The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Correspondence from Guto Harri to ACOBA, by email, 13 October 2022

13 October 2022

Rt Hon Lord Pickles
Chair
Advisory Committee on Business Appointments
London
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Lord Pickles

Thank you for your letters dated 5th and 7th of October seeking clarification of my relationship with Chertwell Speakers Bureau. Having now discussed it with officials I hope I can provide the reassurance you need and clear up a couple of other misunderstandings.

I was listed with Chertwell and other agencies many years ago, after an 18 year career at the BBC. I have not been engaged by any of them for at least a decade but I don't think my biography was ever removed. On leaving No10 I did agree for Chertwell and the Atlantic Speaker Bureau to update my listings. They have done to.

To be clear - for the purposes of ACOBO - I have no contract with either. I have not signed any agreements. There are no obligations on either side. I have not made any speeches. And I have not been paid a penny. I have not, in that sense, "joined" a speaking agency, nor "entered into a longer term arrangement" - the basis upon which you raised your concerns.

You have kindly clarified that ACOCA is not concerned about "one-off" broadcasts, articles or speeches, so I hope we can agree there is no breach of any rules here. I am obviously sorry for any confusion or misunderstanding and will seek to avoid this in future by pro-actively tipping off your officials.

I am grateful to you for looking into the missing advice I sought long before leaving public service on setting myself up as an independent consultancy. The email you refer

to never reached by inbox and so I had no opportunity to respond. An official has now re-sent it and I am grateful for the guidance. A follow-up email to a separate request to re-join the board of a water technology company in Wales also went missing. That, too, has now been forwarded to me and I have agreed to its provisions.

I have no hesitation in saying that I fully aware of my obligations under the OSA and other legally binding restrictions following my role in government. I also appreciate the importance of the work you do to safeguard the reputation of government and public service.

I hope this helps

Guto Harri

Correspondence from ACOBA to Guto Harri 7 October 2022



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7 October 2022

Dear Mr Harri

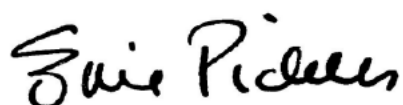
I have been shown an email from you dated 5 October (enclosed below), which appears to be a response to my letter dated the same day.

I have carefully examined your complaint about a delay by ACOBA following an application to set up a consultancy received on 26 August 2022. On checking I discovered the provisional advice was sent to you by email on 23 September. ACOBA has no record of receiving a reply confirming you are content to accept and abide by the advice. This is a necessary step in order for it to be finalised. I, therefore, conclude that the alleged 'limbo' you find yourself in is due to your failure to respond. Please do so without delay.

As I made clear in my earlier letter, your engagement with Chartwell was brought to ACOBA's attention through an article in the media. We do not have the staff resources to 'trawl the web'. I note your confirmation that you have not been commissioned by anyone, nor paid, to date. However, you have not confirmed whether you have entered into a longer term arrangement with Chartwell. To do so without advice would be a breach of the government's rules, and was the sole purpose of my earlier letter.

You have asked about next steps. I think you need to reply confirming that you will abide by ACOBA's advice on your earlier application. Secondly, if you would give an explanation on an apparent failure to seek advice in relation to signing up with Chartwell. With regard to this latter point you have until 20 October to reply. After which you will be reported to the Minister for an apparent breach of the government's Rules and any failure to respond will be brought to the attention of the Minister.

In line with our policy of transparency, I will be publishing our correspondence in due course.



The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Correspondence from Guto Harri to ACOBA, by email, 5 October 2022

Hi

I'm still awaiting your advice on my request to set up as a consultant. I submitted a form 2 months ago

Strange how that lies in limbo but you proactively trawl the internet to find a listing for me as a speaker !

Unless I'm commissioned by anyone - which I haven't been - I can't see what there is to clear. I have not given any speeches nor been paid. And if I am - as you confirm here - they don't need to be reported.

So please advise what's needed now ?

Thank you
Guto

Correspondence from ACOBA to Guto Harri 5 October 2022



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5 October 2022

Dear Mr Harri

I am writing to you, as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) following a media report³ about your listing on Chartwell Speakers' website as a Keynote Speaker.⁴

As you know, as a former senior Crown servant you are required to seek advice from the Committee for any appointments or employment within two years of leaving Crown service under the government's Business Appointments Rules (the Rules).

ACOBA does not regard one-off activities such as speeches, broadcasts or newspaper articles as an appointment or employment requiring an application for advice under the government's Rules. ACOBA's guidance is clear that, if you intend to enter into a longer term arrangement, such as joining a speaking agency, an application is required.

ACOBA was not consulted on this - you therefore appear to be in breach of the Rules. ACOBA requires an explanation as to why you failed to seek its advice. Please provide any explanation and/or any other information you wish ACOBA to be aware of by 12 October 2022.

In line with our policy of transparency, I will be publishing our correspondence in due course.

*Yours ever
Sue Pickles*

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

³ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/harri-in-a-hurry-to-get-his-new-gig>

⁴ <https://www.chartwellspeakers.com/speaker/guto-harri/>