



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

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**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: The Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, former Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Paid appointment with GB News.**

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for former ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up an appointment as a presenter on GB News. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex below.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during time in office, alongside the information and influence a former minister may offer GB News.
3. The Committee has advised that a number of conditions be imposed to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with this appointment under the Rules; this is not an endorsement of this appointment in any other respect.
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 are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.
5. It should also be noted that in addition to the conditions imposed on this appointment under the government's Business Appointment Rules, there are separate rules in place with regard to your role as a member of the House of Commons.

The Committee's consideration of the risks presented

6. The Committee<sup>1</sup> noted that you did meet with journalists from GB News and many other major media outlets as an expected part of your duties. Your former department confirmed you made no decisions specifically related to GB News. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk you could be seen to have been offered this role as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office, was low.
7. As a former Cabinet Minister, there are inherent risks associated with your privileged access to information and contacts which may be seen to be of general use to any media company. The risk associated with your access to information is limited given the transparent nature of this role.

### The Committee's advice

8. The Committee did not consider joining GB News as a presenter to raise any particular concerns under the government's Rules, provided it is subject to the conditions below. However, the Committee would remind you it is your responsibility to manage the propriety of the specific pieces of work undertaken with GB News. In particular, as a former Secretary of State, you must be careful not to offer any unfair insight as a result of your access to information and potential influence in government - which the conditions below seek to mitigate.
9. The government's Rules state that as a former Cabinet Minister, you are subject to a three month waiting period as standard.
10. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **GB News** be subject to the following conditions:
  - a waiting period of three months from your last day in ministerial office ;
  - 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 arm's length bodies on behalf of GB News (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 GB News (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 GB News (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) that involves providing advice on the terms of, or with regard to

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Jonathan Baume; Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doverty; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Sarah de Gay and Lord Larry Whitty. Susan Liataud and Richard Thomas were unavailable

the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

11. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your 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 your personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations you may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.
12. 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.
13. 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
14. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that you will do so. Please 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.
15. Once the appointment(s) 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 wish to take up a paid part-time role as a presenter for GB News. GB News is a British TV and radio news channel covering current affairs. GB News is a British free-to-air television and radio news channel. You said your role will not involve contact with government.

### Dealings in office

2. You said that during your time in office you were interviewed by GB News and other media companies and you did not have access to information that could provide an unfair advantage.

#### Department Assessment

3. The Cabinet Office and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy confirmed the details provided in your application.
4. BEIS stated you will have had access to sensitive information in your role as minister including but not limited to the *'status of UK energy security; cases still going through NSI process; commercially sensitive information on particular companies; and the discussions around some ongoing government policy'*.
5. The departments confirmed they had no concerns and recommended the standard conditions. BEIS and CO considered that these would mitigate the risks of this case sufficiently.