

From: Acoba Mailbox acoba@acoba.gov.uk
Subject: Re: Urgent Inquiry Regarding Lord Harrington's Appointment and ACoBA Compliance
Date: 11 April 2025 at 17:25
To: Conor Chapple sparkelectrical.sw@gmail.com



Dear Mr Chapple,
You contacted the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) on 14 March 2025 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information:

1. Did Lord Harrington seek ACoBA approval before accepting his role at Stephenson Harwood LLP?
2. If so, what were the conditions or restrictions placed on his appointment?
3. If no approval was sought or granted, what enforcement actions does ACoBA intend to take regarding this potential breach of the Ministerial Code?
4. Given the potential conflict of interest with UKAS and Oakley Capital, will ACoBA reassess Lord Harrington's appointment under post-ministerial appointment review procedures?

Response

I can confirm that ACoBA does not hold information relevant to your request. It is ACoBA's policy to write to individuals about appointments in the public domain within two years leaving office where ACoBA has not received an application. ACoBA has therefore written to Lord Harrington to ask about the circumstances of this appointment.

Next steps

If you wish to request an internal review of this response, you can do so. You should note that ACoBA will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued. After this time, in the interests of transparency, this response to your information request will be published on ACoBA's website with your personal information redacted. Should you wish to request an internal review or you are unhappy with the service provided, you should write to:

Chief Executive
Civil Service Commission
Room G/08
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ
E-mail: chief.executive@csc.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by ACoBA. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,
Emily Gillman
Committee Secretariat

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments
G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
Tel: 0207 271 0839
acoba@acoba.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/acoba

ACoBA operates a hybrid working model. We are contactable via our usual phone and email channels. Email is preferred.

We are committed to respecting your privacy and safety in collecting and processing your personal data. For further information see the ACoBA [privacy notice](#).

On Fri, 14 Mar 2025 at 02:18, Conor Chapple <sparkelectrical.sw@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear ACoBA Team,

I am writing to formally request clarification regarding Lord Harrington's compliance with ACoBA's Business Appointment Rules following his transition to Stephenson Harwood LLP within two years of leaving ministerial office.

1. Background & Concerns

Lord Harrington's Ministerial Roles & ACoBA Obligations

- Lord Harrington served as Minister of State (DLUHC) until September 2022 and previously held ministerial positions at BEIS (2017–2019), where he had direct oversight of UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service).
- ACoBA guidelines state that former ministers must seek approval before taking up any appointment within two years and are prohibited from lobbying government during this period.

Appointment at Stephenson Harwood LLP

- Lord Harrington joined Stephenson Harwood LLP in early 2024 (Evidenced in February), within the mandatory two-year clearance period.
- There is no public record indicating he sought or received ACoBA approval before accepting this role.
- Stephenson Harwood LLP was already representing UKAS during the Grenfell Inquiry (2022)
- Harrington's role at Harwood began prior to the inquiry concluding, which raises concerns over potential conflicts of interest and insider regulatory influence.

Regulatory Influence & UKAS Governance Concerns

- Philip Rycroft has been a Non-Executive Director of UKAS since October 2019. Prior to this, he was:
 - Permanent Secretary at DExEU (2017–2019).
 - Second Permanent Secretary at (2017).
 - Head of the UK Governance Group, Cabinet Office (2015–2019).
 - The signatory of UKAS MoUs (2009–April 2017), overseeing UKAS policy during his tenure within Government/BIS.
- In July 2019, Hugh Taylor transitioned from the Department for International Trade (DIT) to UKAS.
- Now, another former BEIS/DLUBC minister (Harrington) is joining the law firm that represented UKAS during the Grenfell Inquiry and continues to do so in private matters.
- This pattern of transitions raises serious concerns over regulatory capture, impartiality in accreditation, and conflicts of interest.

2. Formal Request for Clarification

I respectfully request ACoBA's response to the following questions:

1. Did Lord Harrington seek ACoBA approval before accepting his role at Stephenson Harwood LLP?
2. If so, what were the conditions or restrictions placed on his appointment?
3. If no approval was sought or granted, what enforcement actions does ACoBA intend to take regarding this potential breach of the Ministerial Code?
4. Given the potential conflict of interest with UKAS and Oakley Capital, will ACoBA reassess Lord Harrington's appointment under post-ministerial appointment review procedures?

3. Next Steps & Urgency

Given the serious governance concerns related to ministerial post-employment safeguards, I would appreciate a formal response at your earliest convenience.

Please confirm receipt of this email and provide an estimated timeline for your response.

(Further Details Can Be Provided)

Conor Chapple

Government posts

Minister of State (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

15 March 2022 - 4 September 2022



Minister of State (Home Office)
Home Office

15 March 2022 - 4 September 2022



Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

14 June 2017 - 25 March 2019



Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Work and Pensions)
Department for Work and Pensions

17 July 2016 - 14 June 2017



Harrington, Richard - Minister for Refugees at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office - ACOBA Advice

Correspondence with Richard Harrington former Minister for Refugees at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office, in relation to appointments after leaving Crown service

From: [Advisory Committee on Business Appointments](#)

Published 15 February 2021

Last updated 7 December 2022 — [See all updates](#)

Page order

register190224.pdf

Category 10: Non-financial interests (e)
Chair of the Commission on Civil Society and

HARRINGTON OF WATFORD, LORD

Category 2: Remunerated employment, office, profession etc.

Senior Adviser on corporate transactions to Stephenson **Harwood** (solicitors)
Board Adviser, Intelligent-FS (construction)
Senior Adviser on mergers and acquisitions, Canaccord Genuity (full-service investment banking and financial services company)

Category 4: Shareholdings (b)

RH Advisory Ltd (service company)
Secure Income REIT plc (real estate) (interest ceased 9 October 2023)
Harrington Properties Ltd (property development)

Category 5: Land and property

Title: register190224
Author: batemanc
Subject: Master Style Template
PDF Producer: Microsoft® Word for Microsoft 365
Content creator: Microsoft® Word for Microsoft 365
Creation date: 19 Feb 2024 at 16:04
Modification date: 19 Feb 2024 at 16:17

Memorandum of Understanding between Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and United Kingdom Accreditation Service
2017

Revision to Appendix 1

Appendix 1 (version 6 – April 2017)

In accordance with paragraph 3.1 of this Memorandum, the activities for which UKAS is recognised by the Secretary of State as the sole national body under the terms of this Memorandum and associated licensing agreement and Regulations 765/08 are set out in this Appendix. Variations or amendments to the list will have effect if agreed in writing between the parties hereto.

- The accreditation to the International Standard ISO/IEC 17025 of laboratories carrying out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling;
- The accreditation of inspection bodies to ISO/IEC 17020;
- The accreditation of certification bodies to ISO/IEC 17021-1 (and ISO/IEC 17021 until the end of the transition period³) for the

Signed by

Memorandum of Understanding between Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and United Kingdom Accreditation Service
[Signed 8 December 2009]

Appendix 1 (version 5 – February 2014)

In accordance with paragraph 3.1 of this Memorandum, the activities for which UKAS is recognised by the Secretary of State as the sole national body under the terms of this Memorandum and associated licensing agreement and Regulations 765/08 are set out in this Appendix. Variations or amendments to the list will have effect if agreed in writing between the parties hereto.

- The accreditation to the International Standard ISO/IEC 17025 of laboratories carrying out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling;
- The accreditation of inspection bodies to ISO/IEC 17020;



Philip Rycroft

Director General, Innovation and Enterprise, an
Regulation Executive – BIS

on behalf of THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
INNOVATION AND SKILLS